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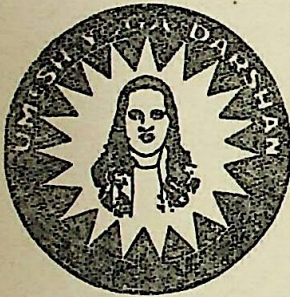
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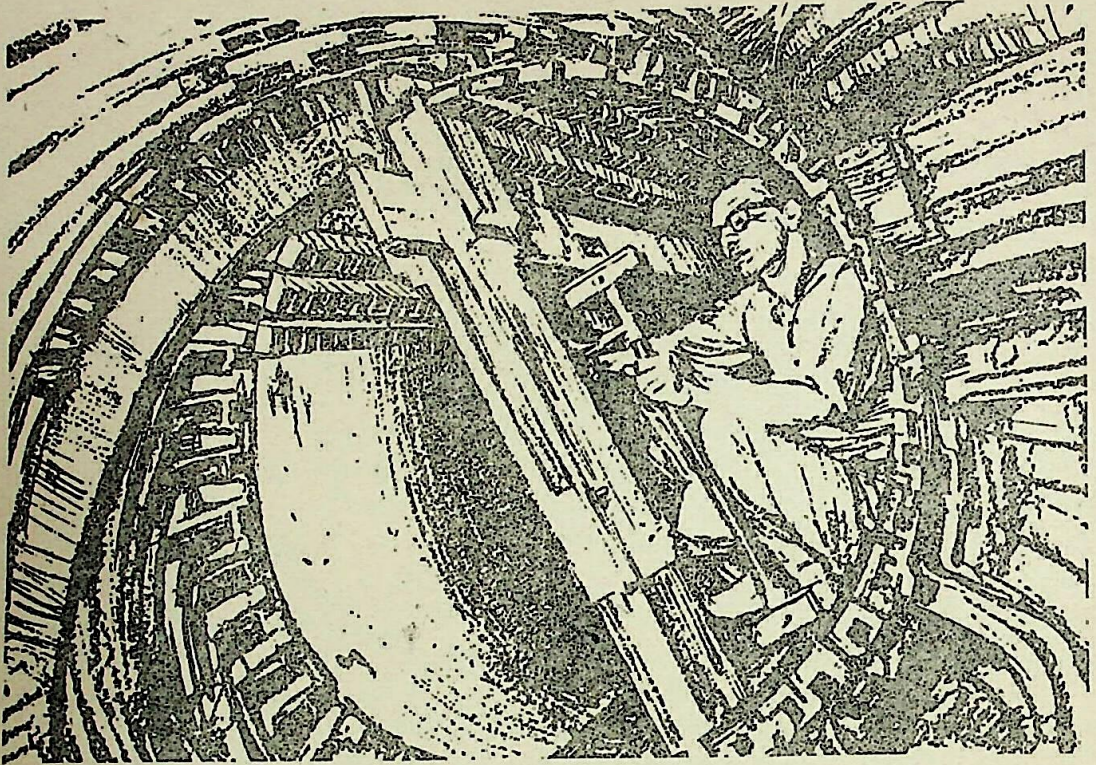
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THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. LIII

DECEMBER 1966

No. 8

PARAMĀRTHASĀRA

जन्मविनाशनगमनागममलसम्बन्धवर्जितो नित्यम् । आकाश इव घटादिशु सर्वात्मा
सर्वदोषेतः ॥ ५१ ॥

51. The Self of all is ever devoid of connection with birth, and destruction, going and coming, and impurity (nescience), and is all-pervasive like ether in the pots etc.

कर्म शुभाशुभफलमुखदुःखैर्गो भवत्युपाधीनाम् । तत्संसर्गाद् बन्धस्तस्करसङ्गादतस्करवत्
॥ ५२ ॥

52. The activity of the adjuncts and contact with happiness and misery — which are the fruits of meritorious and sinful deeds — appear to occur in the Self because of its association (i.e. identification) with the adjuncts, just as a person though not a thief gets arrested due to his association with a thief.

देहगुणकरणगोचरसङ्गात् पुरुषस्य यावदिह भावः । तावन्मायापाशैः संसारे बद्ध इव
भाति ॥ ५३ ॥

53. As long as a person identifies himself with the body,¹ qualities,² instruments³ and the objects⁴ so long does he appear to be bound in this *samsāra* by the ropes of *Māyā*.

¹ By *body* is meant here the unmanifest (*avyakta*), *mahat*, the ego (*ahaṅ-kara*), and the five elements which have transformed into the body.

² The *qualities* referred to are : cognition, happiness, misery, desire, effort etc.

³ The organs of senses and action are the *instruments*.

⁴ The *objects* are those which can be grasped by the organs.

See also *Gīta*, XIII. 5-6 & *Kaṭha*, 1. 3. 10 & 11.

मातृपितृपुत्रवान्धवधनभोगविभागसम्मूढः । जन्मजरामरणमये चक्र इव भ्राम्यते जन्तुः ॥ ५४ ॥

54. The creature goes round and round this *samsārā*, comprising of birth, old age, and death, like (a worm) on a wheel, being deluded by the various attachments represented as mother, father, son, relation, wealth and objects of enjoyment.

लोकव्यवहारकृतां य इहाविद्यामुपासते मूढाः । ते जननमरणधर्माणोऽन्धं तम एत्य
स्मिन् ॥ ५५ ॥

55. Those fools, who, devoted to nescience, identify themselves with the empirical self (body etc.), enter into deep darkness,¹ and become subject to changes like birth and death and suffer.

¹ Are born again. The reference is to the *Br. Up.* passage (4. 4. 10).

हिमफेनबुद्बुदा इव जलस्य धूमो यथा वह्नेः । तद्वत् स्वभावभूता मायैषा कीर्तिता
विष्णोः ॥ ५६ ॥

56. This¹ *Māyā* of *Viṣṇu*² is said to be established in His own nature just as the snow, foam, and bubbles in water, and smoke in fire.³

¹ This *Māyā* is the cause of transmigration.

² *Viṣṇu* is the self of all beings.

³ Just as from limpid and liquid water, white hard ice etc., are formed, just as from light-giving fire dark smoke arises, likewise, from the effulgent Paramatman, *Māyā*, which clouds vision, arises. The brightness of an effulgent object indeed could not be proved conclusively in the absence of darkness. Or, alternatively, the verse could be taken to be an answer to the question : With what motive does the great Lord having recourse to His *Māyā* create Mahat and subsequently the Cosmic Egg and in it the fourteen worlds and in them the movable and immovable beings, and after creating them enter into them as the inner-controller, and the empirical Self, to rule the universe and undergo pleasure and pain respectively, without violating His law ? As from water, ice, foam and bubbles are formed naturally, without any motive, as from fire smoke naturally arises, so *Māyā* which is of the nature of effect and cause naturally, without any motive, arises from the Lord. For there can be no possibility of any motive for the Lord who has attained all His desires.

See also Gauḍapāda's *Māṇḍūkya Kārika*, 1. 9.

एवं द्वैतविकल्पां भ्रमस्वरूपां विमोहनीं मायाम् । उत्सृज्य सकलनिष्कलमद्वैतं भावयेद्
ब्रह्म ॥ ५७ ॥

57. Discarding *Māyā*, which in this way presents duality, which is of the nature of illusion and which infatuates, meditate on Brahman which is non-dual, and partless, yet (appears to be) with parts.

¹ There is only the appearance of duality, for in the non-dual reality duality is impossible.

(Continued on page 343)

WHERE TO SEEK COMFORT

I

THAT this world is a conglomeration of good and evil, of happiness and misery, of concord and discord, of endearment and estrangement, of union and separation, of origination and destruction is a known fact. All human effort is to go beyond these pairs of opposites, to attain unalloyed bliss. Men try to reach that state in various ways ; some by wealth, some by progeny, some by doing good, some by intellectual attainments, some by obtaining power, yet in the end none of these attain it. Instead of the peace that they seek, through these means, they attain only unrest, either provoked by a thirst for more and more of the things sought, or lost in the care and tending of the things obtained.

The world that we thus create absorbs all our mind and the more we get attached to things and begin to identify ourselves with them, the more acute becomes the anguish at separation or estrangement from them. Man knows this, yet he cannot get away from them, nay he does not even attempt to get away. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'the camel eats the thorny bushes and in doing so bleeds profusely, yet it will not stop eating the thorny plants'. Even so is man's life here. He knows that he has to undergo untold miseries in this world, once he gets entangled into it, yet he cannot help involving himself in it. What is it that compels him to do it ? His desires and passions ; his seeking happiness and comfort outside of himself.

Indian psychologists tell us that the creation is an imbalance of the three constituents, *gunas* of Prakṛti or Nature. These *gunas* are to be found in every created being. '*Sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* are the three *gunas*, which have originated from Prakṛti and bind the immutable Self dwelling in the body. *Sattva* because it is pure (like a crystal) reflects light,

and is quiescent and binds through conjunction with happiness and knowledge. Know, *rajas* to be of a pleasing nature, the source of all thirst and attachment. It binds the Self through association with activity. Know *tamas* which deludes all beings to be born of nescience. By error, laziness and sleep it binds the Self,'¹ says Sri Krishna in the *Gītā*. As already pointed out, all these *gunas* are existent in every being ; only in some people some one of them is predominant and in others some other, and so on, and according to the dominating factor man becomes quiescent, active or idle. It is *rajas* or the active principle in man that makes him restless and run after pleasures. Goaded by desires man commits good and bad deeds, the fruits of which he alone has to reap. The fruits of good deeds taste sweet but of bad ones taste bitter. It is then that we feel miserable. We, however, try to foist the blame for our suffering on to someone else, forgetting that it is the fruits of our own action that we are reaping. It is at this time that man seeks solace and comfort. Where shall he seek it ?

An agnostic or a sceptic has no belief in a higher being. He relies on matter, material comforts, to soothe him. Does he attain it ? No. It is then that he takes to intoxicants and tranquillizers in order to forget his unhappiness. But the mind is such a mechanism that it remembers only those things which we want

¹ सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसम्भवाः ।
निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ।
तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात्प्रकाशकमनामयम् ।
सुखं सङ्गेन बध्नाति ज्ञानं सङ्गेन चानघ ।
रजो रागात्मकं विद्धि तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवम् ।
तन्निबध्नाति कौन्तेय कर्मसङ्गेन देहिनम् ।
तमस्त्वज्ञाजं विद्धि मोहनं सर्वदेहिनाम् ।
प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिस्तन्निबध्नाति भारत ।

to forget and thus chases man, unceasingly from pillar to post, as it were. Man can escape even from the most vigilant hand of law but not from his own mind. Like a shadow it accompanies him everywhere.

Perhaps misery is placed in this world as a corrective to an erring humanity. 'Well,' you may ask, 'do not the believers suffer? We see that they suffer more than the unbelievers.' Pleasure and pain alternate in this world. As Swami Vivekananda says, 'Life is and must be accompanied by evil. A little evil is the source of life'. What does he mean by the latter statement? It is because there is a little evil in us that we are born. The *Praśna Upaniṣad* remarks: 'By meritorious deeds one attains the meritorious worlds and by sinful acts the sinful worlds and when there is a balance of good and evil the creature is born in the form of a human being'.²

II

Now, dexterity is in getting beyond good and evil, for in that alone lies peace. How to do it? By reposing confidence in God and submitting to His will. How can we know what His will is? Whatever happens, happens by His will. In that case why shouldn't we think that what we attempt to do is also His will? True there is no argument against that. But are you sure that it is His will that is working through you? If so you will not feel elated when success comes and depressed when your attempts result in failure. If on the other hand, there is the slightest elation or ego, that you have achieved something or you are the doer, then you do not believe in what you say. It is hypocrisy that makes you say that God's will is working through you. Should we then submit meekly to all calamities? No one advocates that. As long as you are aware that you are the agent of actions, you must resist all that you feel as wrong. The dictum 'Resist not evil' is meant

for very highly evolved souls. It does not mean only physical non-resistance but mental also. No modifications should arise in the mind of one devoted to non-resistance against the evil doer. When such a state is reached you can speak of this dictum. For ordinary people the path is to resist evil by all means at their command.

How does solace come if we believe that it is God's will that is working? The misery that comes is not softened, the blow that falls is not padded because of that belief. No, we do not say that. Such a belief does not mean that we will not suffer calamities, will always be free from worry, but that the strength to bear the pain comes along with the tribulations. We will not be frantic when calamities occur, knowing that it is His will that is sending them.

Does an ordinary man who believes in God has this faith, this strength? Each one gets his desserts according as his faith is strong or weak. It is said that faith can move mountains but that faith itself must be like a mountain, unshakable. Sri Ramakrishna used to tell a story of a Guru and a disciple. The disciple was a milk-maid, who used to supply the Guru with milk. She lived across a river and had to wait for the ferry boat to cross the stream. One day when she was late the Guru asked her what made her come late. She explained that as she had to wait for the ferry boat she was delayed. The Guru said, 'What! Can you not take the name of the Lord — whose name ferries across people even from this vast ocean of transmigration — and cross this river?' The woman was a simple village lady having implicit faith in the words of her Guru. After some days the Guru observed that the woman was very regular, not even a day was she late. He then asked her 'My child, how is it that you are regular these days'. 'Why, revered Sir, did you not tell me that I could cross the river by taking the name of the Lord? I do it, and therefore I have not to wait for the ferry boat and am regular in my service to you,' replied the woman. The Guru could not believe that this was possible. He commanded her to demons-

² पुण्येन पुण्यं लोकं नयति पापेन

पापमुभाभ्यामेव मनुष्य लोकम् ।

— *Praśna Upaniṣad*, 3. 7.

trate the phenomenon. The woman walked over the water taking the name of the Lord as if she was walking on solid ground whereas the Guru himself walked into the water, and was seen tucking his cloth lest it should get wet. The woman had faith whereas the Guru had not and each was rewarded according to his faith.

How does this faith develop? By being simple, by being guileless. When one is guileless he trusts in the person whom God has chosen to send to him as his teacher. He implicitly follows him, once he comes to know about the genuineness of the teacher.

III

How about those who are not so straightforward or simple? They have to struggle hard to overcome their crookedness. They have to pray with sincerity to the Lord that He may straighten all their angularities and crookednesses. What if the prayers are not answered? That doubt itself shows that we have not taken to the path seriously, with all earnestness. Swami Vivekananda says, 'How much of tempests and waves one has to weather, before one reaches the haven of Peace! The greater a man has become, the fiercer the ordeal he has had to pass through'. So we should not give up, if our prayers are not answered all at once. The struggle must continue whatever happens. For there is no comfort elsewhere. Where will you go? In what will you trust? In wealth, progeny, relations, friends? How far can they help and how can they dispel your miseries which are beyond all human help? Knowing that no one is our own except God we have to take shelter in Him. Seek comfort in Him. Swami Vivekananda says with authority, 'Give up all "me and mine". To him who has nothing in the universe the Lord comes'. If you read his letters you will find that these words came out of the fullness of the heart, out of his own experience; that is why even now his words thrill and infuse confidence in the readers. The words of those who have touched and felt the

Infinity have a vigour of their own. These words, like fire, consume all doubts and vacillations of those who hear or read them.

Why then do believers too grumble and groan under the axe of misery? Because they have not accepted the Lord *in toto*. And it is not possible also to accept Him in such a way as long as there is the slightest desire for enjoyment, as long as there is the slightest imperfection. Sri Krishna assures Arjuna, 'I take the responsibility of supplying the needs and of protection of those who think of Me alone and serve and adore Me always and are ever devoted to Me'.³

The worldly-wise may then question whether the Lord is partial. If so, He is no better than a human being. To this Sri Krishna himself replies: 'I am equally manifest in all beings. No one is hateful or dear to Me. Yet those who worship Me with devotion I am in them and they are in Me'.⁴ The Lord is present in every creature as the inner-controller, as the inmost Being. How then can He hate any one? The meaning is the devotee loses the differentiation and distance that an ordinary man feels from the Lord. To the devotee the Lord becomes his own and the things mundane are only of secondary importance, or of no importance at all. His life becomes God-centred. There is a song which describes this attitude of the *bhakta*.

Thou art my All in All, O Lord! — The
Life of my life, the Essence of essence;
In the three worlds I have none else but
Thee to call my own.
Thou art my peace, my joy, my hope;
Thou my support, my wealth, my glory;
Thou my wisdom and my strength.
Thou art my home, my place of rest; my
dearest friend, my next of kin;
My present and my future, Thou; my heaven
and my salvation.

³ अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।

तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ।

— *Gita*, IX. 22.

⁴ समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः ।

ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ।

— *Ibid.*, IX. 29.

Thou art my scriptures, my commandments ;
 Thou art my ever gracious Guru ;
 Thou the Spring of my boundless bliss.
 Thou art the Way, and Thou the Goal ;
 Thou the Adorable One, O Lord !
 Thou art the Mother tender-hearted ; Thou
 the chastising Father ;
 Thou the Creator and Protector ; Thou the
 Helmsman who dost steer
 My craft across the sea of life.⁵

IV

What about the wicked who have indulged in evil deeds? Have they no way out? To them also Sri Krishna promises deliverance. 'Even though a man is most wicked if he worships Me with one-pointed devotion, he should be considered as a noble soul, for he is rightly engaged.'⁶ The purport is that a man once wicked is not always wicked. There are chances for him to reform. If he takes shelter in the Lord all his evil tendencies will drop off by themselves as the leaves from a tree in winter. The sinner may be turned into a saint if he constantly remembers and worships Him. 'Anon, he (the wicked one) becomes a saint and attains ever-lasting peace. O son of Kuntī, know firmly that My devotee never comes to grief.'⁷ This is the unequivocal assurance of the Lord to Arjuna. Sri Ramakrishna speaks of the dependence of the kitten on its mother. 'The kitten knows only how to call its mother, crying, "Mew, mew!" It remains satisfied wherever its mother puts it. And the mother cat puts the kitten sometimes in the kitchen, sometimes on the floor, and sometimes on the bed. When it suffers it cries only, "Mew, mew!" That's all it knows. But as soon as the mother hears this

cry, wherever she may be, she comes to the kitten.' The mother cat carries the kitten in its mouth and therefore there is no fear of fall for it. A man's trust in God and yearning for him should be so intense, then and then alone will he feel the response.

Here again, the doubt, already answered, may be raised in another form : Why does not the Lord give faith in Him to all? Why to some and not to others? And to those some again why in various degrees? 'Neither agency nor works does the Lord create for the creatures, nor does he create for them any association with fruits of deeds. Their nature alone engages them in work,'⁸ declares Sri Krishna. Here nature is identified with *avidyā*, nescience. 'The Lord does not receive the sins of some nor does He accept their merits. Knowledge is covered by ignorance and therefore creatures become deluded.'⁹ All the conceit in respect of agency, works and enjoyment of the non-discriminative is due to nescience, *avidyā*. 'To them who have their ignorance destroyed by the knowledge of the Self the Supreme Reality is evident like the sun.'¹⁰ It is attributing of agency of actions to oneself, due to ignorance, that brings in all this difference. Otherwise how can the Self which is pure and associationless can be said to be miserable. There will not be any sorrow when this identification of our Self with the body, senses and mind is transcended. Misery, fear, jealousy and the like arise because of seeing duality. 'When one sees that all that exists is only the manifestation of the Ātman, the Self, then where is grief, and where is delusion,

⁵ *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, pp. 776-7, second edition, 1947. Pub.: Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras-4.

⁶ अपि चेत्सदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।

साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्यवसितो हि सः ।

— *Gita*, IX. 30.

⁷ क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।

कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ।

— *Ibid.*, IX. 31.

⁸ न कर्तृत्वं न कर्माणि लोकस्य सृजति प्रभुः ।

न कर्मफलसंयोगं स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते ।

— *Ibid.*, V. 14.

⁹ नादत्ते कस्यचित्पापं न चैव सृकृतं विभुः ।

अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं तेन मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः ।

— *Ibid.*, V. 15.

¹⁰ ज्ञानेन तु तदज्ञानं येषां नाशितमात्मनः ।

तेषामादित्यवज्ज्ञानं प्रकाशयति तत्परम् ।

— *Ibid.*, V. 16.

for him who sees everything as one,'¹¹ says the *Īśāvāsyopaniṣad*, Another Upaniṣad says 'from (seeing) duality alone fear arises'.¹² Therefore, as the layers of ignorance are peeled off from our vision more and more light of knowledge shines within us and the wrong concepts that we had regarding the world, drop away yielding place to the true ones. When true knowledge dawns the vale of misery turns into a mart of mirth. All things remain as before; their contents do not change, but the attitude, of one who witnesses, changes. It is the Lord's world that the devotee sees and he can have no fear from it. The Advaitin sees not duality but the nondual Brahman pervading everything and therefore is at peace with himself and the world.

V

Now, what about those who are entangled in the world already? To them Sri Ramakrishna says: "Do all your duties, but keep your mind on God. Live with all — with wife and children, father and mother — and serve them. Treat them as if they were very dear to you, but know in your heart of hearts that they do not belong to you.

"A maidservant in the house of a rich man performs all the household duties, but her thoughts are fixed on her own home in her native village. She brings up her master's children as if they were her own. She even speaks of them as 'my Rama', or 'my Hari'. But in her own mind she knows very well that they do not belong to her at all."

One should live in the world like the maidservant of this example.

Thus we see that in God, Brahman or the Supreme Being alone is our comfort and not anywhere else.

¹¹ यस्मिन्सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मैवामूढिजानतः ।

तत्र को मोहः कः शोकः एकत्वमनुपश्यतः ॥

—Isa Up., 7.

¹² द्वितीयाद्वै मयं भवति । —Br. Up., I. iv. 2.

PARAMĀRTHASĀRA — (Continued from page 338)

² *Appearing to be with parts though partless*: As the universe Brahman appears to be with names and forms yet it ever remains as Existence, Bliss and Consciousness, just as the rope that is seen in semi-darkness, though all the time remains only the rope, appears as serpent, stick and so forth.

यद्वत् सलिले सलिलं क्षीरे क्षीरं समीरणे वायुः । तद्वद् ब्रह्मणि विमले भावनया

तन्मयत्वमुपयाति ॥ ५८ ॥

58. As water (poured into) water, milk into milk and air (mixed) with air attains oneness (with them respectively), so too meditating on pure Brahman (as the Self) a person attains its nature.

इत्थं द्वैतसमूहे भावनया ब्रह्मभूयमुपयाते । को मोहः कः शोकः सर्वं ब्रह्मावलोकयतः ॥ ५९ ॥

59. When by meditation, in this way, the entire duality attains the nature of Brahman, what delusion and what sorrow can there be for one who sees everything as Brahman.

Refer also *Īśāvāsyopaniṣad*, 7.

FOR ENQUIRERS ABOUT THE MONASTIC ORDER OF RAMAKRISHNA

SWAMI TAPASYANANDA

I

THE MONASTIC ORDER — ITS ORIGIN AND SPRINGS OF INSPIRATION

IN order to understand the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement — what it stands for and how an individual can qualify to be a worker of that Cause — we have to enter into the spirit of the life and teachings of those two great souls from whom the movement has its origin. The life of Sri Ramakrishna was a unique record of passionate longing for the Divine and a striking fulfilment of this aspiration through Divine realization. 'The story of Ramakrishna's life,' says Mahatma Gandhi in his forward to the biography of the Great Master, 'is a story of religion in practice. His life enables us to see God face to face. No one can read the story of his life without being convinced that God alone is real and that all else is an illusion.'

He vindicated through his life and experiences the age-old spiritual ideals of India like Śraddha (Faith), Sādhana (spiritual practice), Brahmacharya (purity through continence), Sākṣātkārā (God-realization) and Viśvaprema (universal love). Those who lived and moved with him found in him a channel of Divine Grace, uplifting the sinners, illumining the saints and infilling one and all with Divine bliss.

There have been saints and saints in India and abroad, but Sri Ramakrishna towers above them all, along with the other great Messengers of Light, as one who has brought the redeeming love of God to modern humanity, opened a new path of salvation to mankind, and effected the grand synthesis of Karma, Bhakti, Yoga and Jñāna, as also of all the great religions of the world.

Though externally uneventful and cast in the mould of that of an ascetic and a recluse, his life was most dynamic and thrilling from a psychological point of view, abounding as it did in heroic achievements in the field of Tapasya (austerity), Sādhana (spiritual practice), Tyāga (renunciation) and Anubhava (realization). The passionate lover of humanity that he was, he did not live away from mankind, but lived in their midst, sharing their woes and imparting strength and consolation to them through his spiritual ministry. People of all classes and age-groups visited him in large numbers, and he spoke to them incessantly on love of God and the ways of realizing Him. But the wise teacher that he was, his teachings were specially directed to groups of young men with great spiritual calibre in them. For he knew that a spiritual message, to be useful to mankind as a whole, can be given only through an apostolic succession of teachers and disciples. These young men were specially prepared by him through example and precept to take to the life of renunciation and service, and continue the spiritual ministry that he initiated in his life time.

Among these young men the most talented was Narendranath who came to be known later as Swami Vivekananda. In his early youth Narendra was very much influenced by the spirit of reform and agnostic outlook characteristic of the new intellectuals emerging from Indian universities in the mid-nineteenth century. A general distrust of India's age-old spiritual ideals and ways of life was in the intellectual atmosphere of the times, and Narendranath too was a victim to those influences. But he was endowed with an innate spirit of renunciation and an ardent aspiration

to arrive at certitude regarding the nature of life and its ultimate meaning. So even in the midst of scepticism and agnostic thought he was known to engage himself in ardent prayer and meditation. It was this quest — the upsurge of God-seeking, the spirit of the true Brahmacharin in him — that took him to Sri Ramakrishna. The contact with the Master produced a slow revolution in him. His innate spiritual nature asserted itself, and under the fostering care of the Master, he traversed the path of Sādhana which took him to the pinnacle of God-realization. Naren, the agnostic and the vehement critic of Indian religion and society, recognized through his Master the essential spiritual worth of Indian culture. To this worthy recipient the Master imparted the great spiritual power enshrined in himself. He made him the earthly medium for the fulfilment of the great mission with which he was born. Above all he commissioned him to organize into a Brotherhood the band of young spiritual aspirants whose lives were being moulded by him in the last years of his life, and to start through this Brotherhood an apostolic succession of teachers to continue his spiritual ministry for the benefit of generations to come.

After the Master's passing the young disciples consolidated themselves into a Brotherhood under the leadership of Narendranath. They left their hearths and homes, and took to the life of Sannyasa. Their whole time was devoted to the practice of Sādhana and study of the scriptures, and several of them, including the leader Narendranath, went forth into the broad world as Parivrājakas (wandering ascetics), penniless and friendless, treading their way on foot to places of pilgrimage or to solitary mountain caves for the practice of austerities. But in spite of this urge for wandering they never abandoned their sense of being members of a Brotherhood brought together by the love of the Master and the sense of the mission that he had transmitted to them. What that mission was, was not yet very clear to them, and even the leader Narendranath had only a hazy idea about it. Hence

though often scattered apart for days and months, and in some cases for years, from one another, they always came to rally together either partly or wholly, and the centre of their rallying was the shrine where they preserved the Master's relics and carried on his service at a small rented Math building at Calcutta. The worship of the Master was conducted in the spirit that he was a living presence for whom physical death did not mean destruction but only the assumption of a subtler and wider medium for working out the great cosmic purpose for which he had taken embodiment. Of all these disciples, Śaśi, who was later known as Swami Ramakrishnananda, took upon himself the special duty of conducting the worship of the Master. While all the other disciples went out for shorter or longer periods as wandering ascetics, Śaśi stuck to the relics of the Master and kept up the continuity of the monastic headquarters of the Brotherhood and thus rendered signal service in maintaining its cohesion.

The Brotherhood received its definite shape, both in its form and function, after Narendranath emerged as a world figure under the name of Swami Vivekananda from the great Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in 1893. The Swami's ideas about the Master's mission in the context of Indian national life had by that time become clear. His insight into India's history and culture convinced him that spirituality is the soul of India's national life, and that India would continue to have undying vitality so long as the nation remains true to its spiritual ideals. Even phases of material greatness in Indian national history have always been accompanied by the appearance of great spiritual figures and spiritual upheavals associated with them. It was his conviction that without vitalizing this spiritual core, mere attempts at political, social and economic uplift of the country will end in disastrous failure. According to him, even if a dictator were to succeed in eliminating the spiritual outlook of the people by drastic acts of suppression and tyranny, a purely secularised India would not survive even for three generations. For a close

study of world history reveals that every civilization is more or less functional in regard to the totality of world culture, being evolved by Nature to fulfil some particular purpose in the life of the world as a whole. When a civilization has outlived this purpose or become unfit to work it out, Nature eliminates it out of existence. Thus all the ancient civilizations of the world like those of Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome, in spite of their grand achievements in the political, military, artistic, scientific and administrative fields, all passed away, because they, having fulfilled their ephemeral purposes in life, were effaced by Nature as purposeless survivals. They disappeared leaving their legacy to be taken up and worked out by younger races. Unlike those other ancient civilizations, Indian culture and society alone are still having a continuous existence, because the theme of Indian national life, the spiritual ministration of humanity, is still being followed by her people and because she has even now the capacity to give a lead to the world in this field. That she could produce a spiritual giant of the magnitude of Sri Ramakrishna, even when she was in a state of political subjection and cultural decadence, is proof positive to her undying spiritual vitality.

According to the Swami's reading of current Indian history the advent of the Master indicates that India is going to be the spiritual Guru of mankind even in the present age as she was in the past. The Master has heralded a new age in India's cultural life by the quickening he has given to its spiritual energies. In the great material developments that are going to take place in the country, the Master is the spiritual ballast that will hold the equilibrium of our national life. In the many-sidedness of his personality and the all-inclusiveness of his teachings he found the channel through which the spiritual thought of India could flow to all parts of the world.

He now recognized in the group of his Sannyasin co-disciples, whom Sri Ramakrishna had commissioned him to form into a Brotherhood, the nucleus of the Sangha, the spiritual

organization, for working out the mission of the Great Master. The place where the relics of the Master were preserved had formed the headquarters of this Brotherhood, but it was as yet improperly housed, and it was the aspiration of the Swami, even before he left for the West, to build a permanent centre for housing the relics and the Brotherhood. In a revealing letter dated 26th May 1890, he says : 'I have already told you at the outset that I am Ramakrishna's slave, having laid my body at his feet "with Til and Tulsi leaves"'. I cannot disregard his behest. If it is in failure that the great sage laid down his life after having attained to superhuman heights of Jñāna, Bhakti, Love and Powers, and after having practised for forty years stern renunciation, non-attachment, holiness and great austerities, then where is there anything for us to count on ? So I am obliged to trust his words as the words of one identified with Truth. Now his behest to me was that I should devote myself to the service of the Order of all-renouncing devotees founded by him, and in this I have to persevere, come what may, being ready to take heaven, hell, salvation or anything that may happen to come. His command was that his all-renouncing devotees should group themselves together and I am entrusted with seeing to this. Of course, it matters not if any one goes out on visits to this place or that, but these shall be but visits, while his own opinion was that absolute homeless wandering suited him alone who was perfected to the highest point. Before that state, it is proper to settle somewhere, to dive down into practice. So in pursuance of his commandment his group of Sannyasins are now assembled in a dilapidated house at Baranagore The sacred remains, his seat and his picture are every day worshipped in our Math in proper form Now there is no knowing as to where his disciples will stand with his sacred remains and his seat. The disciples are Sannyasins and are ready to depart anywhere their way may lie. But I, their servant, am in an agony of sufferings and my heart is breaking to think that a small piece

of land could not be had in which to install the remains of Bhagavan Ramakrishna'.

This desire of the Swami came to be fulfilled only after his return from the West, when he was able to purchase the extensive lawns on the bank of the Ganges at Belur and build the present Belur Math buildings with the donation of a devoted Western disciple.* In 1898 the Swami installed the relics of the Master in the new Math premises, carrying the urn on his own right shoulders. For as he said, 'The Master once told me, "I shall go and live wherever you take me on your own shoulders, be it under a tree or the humblest cottage". With faith in that promise I am myself carrying him to the Math site. So long as his name inspires his followers with his ideals of purity, holiness and universal love, the Master will sanctify this place with his hallowed presence'. And he, ended the installation with the prayer: 'May Bhagavan Ramakrishna, the Divine Incarnation of the age, bless this place with his hallowed presence ever and for ever, and may he make it a unique centre, a *Puṇyakṣetra*, of harmony of all different religions and sects for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many'.

The tremendous faith and expectation with which he founded the Math and the Order is conveyed through the soul-stirring words he uses in his original Rules and Regulations of the Math. He says: 'India shall again awake, and the tidal wave that has emanated from this Centre will, like a great inundation, overflow the whole of mankind and drive them on to liberation. This is our faith, and we have girt up our loins to achieve this to the best of our might, through successive generations of disciples. Whoever will believe in this, shall, through the Lord's grace, be endowed with tremendous strength and energy'.

II

THE IDEOLOGY OF THE ORDER

While giving a shape and a habitation for the Brotherhood (*Sangha*, Order, Organisation), he gave it also a definite ideological background. He states this in his original Rules and Regulations as follows: 'This Organisation is His very body, and in the Organisation itself He is ever present. What the united Organisation orders is verily the Lord's order. He who worships the Organisation worships the Lord, and he who disregards the Organisation disregards the Lord'. In the light of this conception the Brotherhood becomes the earthly symbol of the Master and the medium for the working of His will. Its service thereby becomes the service of the Master and a potent form of *Sādhana*, provided the faith at the back of this conception is strongly adhered to.

The service of the enlightened teacher has always been held out in the Indian tradition as an aid to *Brahma Vidyā*. The particular turn that the work takes may look secular, but the faith in the spiritual teacher, with which it is performed, converts it into a *Sādhana* leading to enlightenment. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* we read of 'Satyakama going to the teacher enquiring about Brahman. But in place of giving him a discourse on philosophy, the teacher asked him to go into the forest tending cattle and return only after the cattle had doubled in number. With a heart full of reverence for the enlightened teacher and in a spirit of service to him, the disciple spent years in tending cattle in the forest, and in the course of his wanderings, received instruction in *Brahma Vidyā* from various aspects of Nature within and without, so that he could return to the teacher at the end of the period of his service, an enlightened man. Here the work done was cow-keeping, which has nothing to do with *Brahma Vidyā* directly. But when performed as a service of the teacher, the apparently secular work becomes transformed into spiritual *Sādhana* under the influ-

* Much later, in 1934, another Western devotee donated a substantial amount to build a splendid temple in the Math Compound at Belur costing about 9 lakhs of rupees then, and the Master's relics have finally been enshrined in it.

ence of faith and worshipful reverence for the teacher.

The teacher who is served through the Organization organized by Swami Vivekananda is not an ordinary Guru, but the Divine come as World Teacher, to fulfil a mission that is of significance for the age of his advent. So the Swami says in his Rules and Regulations : 'The Lord has not yet given up His Ramakrishna form. Some see Him in that form even now and receive instruction from Him, and every one may see Him if he likes. This Form of His will last until He comes once again in another gross body. Though He may not be visible to all, that He is in the Organisation (Sangha, Brotherhood) and is guiding it, is patent to all. Otherwise such a worldwide movement could not have been set on foot in so short a time by this handful of insignificant, helpless and persecuted boys'.

In the light of this conception the Organisation ceases to be a mere association for the achievement of a definite physical objective, as in the case of political, social and economic organisations. It becomes the physical expression or symbol of the spiritual body of the Divinity manifest as World Teacher. To fulfil its commands and work in its service becomes a devotional act and a part of one's spiritual Sādhana. The work may take different forms ; it may be educational work, medical work, publication work, mass contact work or office work. Whatever its form, provided it is done with humility, faith and devotion, and as the service of the Master in fulfilment of his mission, it is a devotional act and a part and parcel of one's spiritual Sādhana.

From the Vedantic point of view it is no doubt one's Prārabdha (effect of past deeds) that puts a person into a particular environment and burdens him with a particular set of duties and makes him do various actions in life. Hence even without the Brotherhood and the works connected with it, a member of it who happens to do medical work would have, by force of Prārabdha, been a medical worker outside, a publishing Brother a publisher out-

side, and an educationist Sadhu an educational worker outside. What Swamiji's conception of the Brotherhood achieves is that for those who accept it and work in the service of the Master, an effective way is provided for overcoming the binding effect of these actions born of one's Prārabdha. Done with the proper attitude of mind, they not only do not bind as in the ordinary course, but become positive acts of devotion and aid the spiritual advancement of the individual just like any other accepted mode of Sādhana. It may be said that this sense of dedication can be practised anywhere and in any station of life according to the Vedanta, and that the peculiar conception of the Brotherhood and the service of the Master through it are superfluous. They can be described as superfluous if one is prepared to call all symbols and aids to worship and spiritual practice as superfluous. For example, as God is everywhere, theoretically he can be worshipped anywhere. But yet people seek churches, mosques, temples etc., for worship and prayer, and go to books, accepted holy places and centres of worship and pilgrimage for spiritual inspiration. They do so because these are symbols effective and helpful in linking the imperfect mind of man with the Infinite and the Absolute through faith and an accepted spiritual tradition. So people resort to them in spite of the philosophical doctrine of divine immanence in all things. So also while all work can be done as worship, theoretically, for those who have faith in Ramakrishna-Vivekananda and the ideology of the Sangha, work in the service of the Lord-Incarnate and his mission through the Sangha can become an easier and more efficient adaptation of that doctrine.

Without understanding this ideological background, one cannot have a proper assessment of the spiritual significance of life in the Brotherhood. Traditionally a Sannyasin is expected to abandon all work and engage himself in study and meditation. There is no place in his life for undertaking medical, educational and other social activities. But the Swami insisted that his Sannyasins should be all-

sided. He has also laid down specially that the Math founded by him should not become a Thakurbari, a mere temple for ceremonial worship and devotional function. He has declared in unmistakable language that its object is to form characters combining Jñāna, Bhakti, Yoga and Karma, and all the Sādhana's that are necessary for that end should be accepted as the Sādhana's of the Math. 'Therefore', he says, 'everyone should bear this in mind, that he who shows deficiency in even a single one of these different branches has not had his character perfectly cast in the mould of Sri Ramakrishna.' But while deficiency in some of these lines is tolerated by him as being due to differences in aptitudes and tendencies, it is incumbent that all should take part in work. Such was the importance he attached to work done with devotional spirit and as service of the Master manifest in the Sangha (Organization).

The importance he gave to work as a part of Sādhana in his monastic community is borne out by many of his writings and utterances. In formulating the objects of the Math, he says that it is established 'to work out one's own liberation and to train oneself to do good to the world in every way along the lines laid down by Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna', but at the same time he emphasizes the special importance of the latter when he states that 'he who strives for the good of others does a nobler work than he who lives to work out only his own liberation'.

This idea is put in the most incisive form in a talk he gave to the young Sannyasins of the Belur Math on 19th June 1899. In the course of the talk he says : 'There is no time to deliver a long discourse on "Renunciation", but I shall very briefly characterize it as "the love of death". Worldly people love life. The Sannyasin is to love death. Are we to commit suicide then? Far from it. What is that love of death then? We must all die, that is certain; let us die then for a good cause. Let all our actions — eating, drinking, and everything that we do — tend towards the sacrifice of our self. You nourish your body

by eating. What good is there in doing that if you do not hold it as a sacrifice to the well-being of others? You nourish your mind by reading books. There is no good in doing that unless you hold it also as a sacrifice to the whole world. It is right for you that you should serve your millions of brothers rather than aggrandize this little self. Thus you must die a gradual death. In such a death is heaven, all good is stored therein — and in its opposite is all that is diabolical and evil. . . . In our country the old idea is to sit in a cave and meditate and die. To go ahead of others in salvation is wrong. One must learn sooner or later that one can not get salvation if one does not try to seek the salvation of his brother. You must try to combine in your life immense idealism with immense practicality. You must be prepared to go into deep meditation now, and the next moment you must be ready to go and cultivate the fields. You must be prepared to explain the difficult intricacies of the Shastras now, and the next moment to go and sell the products of the fields in the market. You must be prepared for all menial services, not only here but elsewhere'.

The new turn that Swamiji has given to Indian monasticism has put fresh vitality and significance into that hoary but dwindling institution. Sannyasa at its best has become identified with the ideal of a recluse or hermit, having minimum of contact with a society that is considered corrupt and irredeemable. At its worst it has been equated with miracle-mongering, palmistry, faith-curing and beggary. It is not unoften that we hear political leaders speaking of more than 50 lakhs of Sadhus in India, including in it all the beggars that roam over the country. While Sannyasa in the sense of beggary is bound to be prohibited in an industrialized India of the near future, it is doubtful how long the practice of it as represented in the ideal of a recluse or a hermit is likely to survive in a society that is becoming thoroughly positivistic in outlook. When the usefulness of an institution is measured in terms of its social worth, the hermit and the recluse

ideal of Sannyasa is likely to dwindle fast both due to want of patronage and the unattractiveness of it to intending entrants.

The Varnashrama ideal of Sannyasa confines the last Ashrama of the Sannyasin to the select few, and that towards the evening of one's career. After a citizen has finished all his duties, domestic and civic, he may take to the life of a recluse in his advanced years. While this has a theoretical perfection about it, due to its implication of a 'full life', it is self-negating in its conception. For after men have become fixed in their habits and standards of living till the age of sixty, and after they have cultivated every possible kind of social relationships and consequent attachments, it is superhuman to expect them to overcome all these obstructing circumstances at an age when infirmity has set in. It is due to the impracticability of this ideal that so very few men of culture and calibre have been taking to Sannyasa Ashrama.

Swami Vivekananda wanted to vitalize and popularize this holy institution, as the great Buddha did in the days of old, by opening its door to the youth of the country and using their energies for their own uplift and the good of the world. The youth cannot be left to a life of pure study and meditation. They have great creative energy that must find expression in work, and at the same time that work should be so phased and so regulated that it becomes an aid to spiritual progress of the individual and results in the general good of society. The ideology of the Sangha with a programme of organized work under its auspices as the service of the Master, is the means that Swami Vivekananda has offered for adapting the monastic ideal to the needs and conditions of the modern world.

But has Swamiji in any way lowered the ideal of Sannyasa by the new turn he has given to it as some traditionalists allege? For a Sannyasin, according to Indian tradition, is a whole time servant of God and engages himself in no kind of external secular work, social or philanthropic. Reflection will, however, show that this criticism is groundless. It

would certainly have been valid if the Sangha were only just an association like so many others for running social service institutions and cultural centres, and the Sannyasins were to work under such auspices most of their time and devote their spare time for their spiritual practices like any other devotee in the world. That would have been a denial of Sannyasa itself. But work in the Sangha, as conceived by Swamiji, is only service of God through the living social symbol of the Incarnate Deity. As such there is no division between the sacred and the secular in the life of a true Sannyasin of the monastic order of Ramakrishna. He is as much a whole time devotee of God as a Sannyasin of any orthodox Vedantic Order, and the work he does in the Sangha is a vital part of his Sādhana. Of course, it will become so only if he has a proper understanding of, and unfailing faith in Swamiji's words and ideas, and if he maintains a constant devotional attitude in his work, eschewing all egoism, vanity and pride of achievement. In fact devoted work in the Sangha, as conceived by Swamiji, has always to go hand in hand with ardent meditation and deep self-analysis, without which work, however vast it might be in extent and worldly value, ceases to have any spiritual significance. Wherever failure is noticed in people professing to follow Swamiji, it is to be attributed not to any flaw in the grand ideal of the synthesis of Yogas he propounded but to the insincerity and incompetence of the persons concerned. By neglect of Bhakti and Jñāna in the midst of their so-called works of service, people degenerate into mere Karmis (busy bodies) almost indistinguishable from worldlings. So also by neglect of truly devoted and dedicated work in the service of the Lord, aspirants, professing to practise Jñāna or Bhakti exclusively, end by becoming ego-centered intellectuals or sentimental neurotics, unless they had already reached a very high state of excellence through the discipline of the harmonious combination of all Yogas. Since such exalted aspirants are very rare, Swamiji has ignored these ideals and laid

stress on the harmonious combination of all Yogas leading to the development of the whole man. This is the ideal suited to the vast majority of aspirants, and it alone can create the right type of personalities required for the conditions of modern life.

III

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S CALL TO THE YOUTH OF THE COUNTRY

The monastic Brotherhood (the Sangha, or the Organization) is the great gift that Swamiji has offered to the youth of the country, having faith in the spiritual ideal and destiny of India. He himself and his great fellow-disciples who had direct contact with Sri Ramakrishna and had been witness to the Divinity manifest in him, have by their life of austerity, service and mutual concord generated a holy tradition and kindled the spirit of brotherhood. Those pioneers of the Sangha are all now gone, leaving this great legacy to posterity through their own disciples, and thus the Order and the tradition are to be transmitted to generations yet to come for the spiritual upliftment of India and the world at large. Swami Vivekananda expected young men to join the Order in large numbers for propagating the message of the Master and keeping up the continuity of the spiritual tradition set in motion by him. Writing to a fellow-disciple in 1894, with the fiery zeal of a spiritual revolutionary, he exhorts : 'We want converts at any risk. . . . Not householder disciples, mind you, we want Sannyasins. Let each one of you have a hundred heads tonsured—young educated men, not fools. Then you are heroes. . . . Start centres at places, go on always making converts. Convert everyone into the monastic order, whoever seeks for it. . . . Whoever at this great spiritual juncture will stand up with a courageous heart and go on spreading from door to door, from village to village, his message, is alone my brother, and a son of his. . . . Whoever will be ready to serve him—no, not him but his children—the poor and the downtrodden, the sinful and the afflicted

—in them he will manifest himself. Through their tongue the goddess of learning herself will speak, and the Divine Mother—the Embodiment of all Power—will enthrone Herself in their hearts.'

While Swamiji thus invites young men in hundreds to join it, he has in mind only people with an innate urge for renunciation and service. For a monastic order, according to him, can be vigorous and healthy only if it keeps up the love of learning, the spirit of austerity and propaganda zeal. Every healthy, educated young man of twenty-five if he is an under-graduate, or of thirty if he is a graduate, who is attracted by the faith and the way of life described above, is eligible for admission into the Order. An intending entrant should have read something of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature, associated himself with some of the Swamis and Maths, and thus have had some acquaintance with the life of the Sangha. He must also be free from undischarged family duties that are likely to weigh on his conscience as a sin of omission and act as a disturbing factor in his proposed monastic career. If he finally desires to join, he can do so in any of the recognized recruiting centres as a pre-probationer for one year, after which he may be recognized as a Brahmacharin ; but his initiation into Brahmacharya in the formal way can take place only four years after this recognition. On completing another period of four years as an initiated Brahmacharin he can be admitted into Sannyasa and full membership of the Order, provided the elders of the Math are satisfied about his fitness. He is given this long period of nine years both to prepare himself and also to be provided with sufficient time to examine his own fitness for a monastic career. In case he finds that the life does not suit him, he is free to go away without any hesitation or obligation. But it must be specially pointed out that no one with a strong urge need feel nervous about joining the Order out of a mere sense of diffidence and under-estimation of one's own worth. In monastic life, as in any community life, the individual is participating in the general group

consciousness and is therefore propped up or pulled down by that consciousness as the case may be, according to the standard of excellence prevailing in the group. The new self-consciousness of being the member of a group of *elite*, together with a host of inhibitions like vows, traditions, dress, associations and so on, raises a solid barrier of protection behind which even one comparatively weak can operate with sure chance of success, provided one is sincere.

During this period as a probationer and as a Brahmacharin, the novice gets opportunity for study and practise of devotional life. While for most of the period he may be a working member of any of the branch centres, it is compulsory that he spends two years at the Head Quarters at Belur in the special training centre attached to it. He will get there systematic instructions in the Scriptures and philosophy, and will also be put into touch with the traditions of the monastic Order. But this training is only just an orientation course, which he will have to pursue all through his life, both from the spiritual and intellectual points of view. As pointed out earlier, Bhakti, Jñāna, Yoga and Karma all form the recognized Sādhana of the Order. But work has special importance because according to the rules laid down by Swami Vivekananda, every member, whatever his predilections, must do some work in the service of the Master. Work cannot therefore be avoided in the name of a pseudo-spirituality, and those who are of that mentality will find themselves misfits in the Order. During the period of training as a Brahmacharin as also after becoming a Sannyasin, a member of the Order will have to take up some responsible work as assistant or head of a centre.

IV

WORK AND LIFE IN THE ORDER

The work in the Sangha ranges from the running of small monastic centres to the management of big publishing houses, of colleges and other educational institutions, of

workshops and engineering institutions, of big hospitals and invalids' homes, of huge relief operations in famine and flood stricken areas, and so on. There is also considerable preaching work, involving the production of books and periodicals, lecturing to audiences of learned and cultured persons as well as common people, and organizing and leading Vedanta Centres in foreign countries of Asia, Europe and America. To give some idea of the type and volume of work the following abstract from the General Report of the Math and Mission for 1964-65 is given : Excluding the Headquarters at Belur, there were in March 1965, 42 Mission centres, 14 combined Math and Mission centres and 28 Math centres in India. . . . In addition there were 2 Mission centres, 5 combined Math and Mission centres and 3 Math centres in East Pakistan ; 2 Mission centres in Burma, 1 Mission centre each in France, Ceylon, Singapore, Fiji and Mauritius ; 1 Math centre each in Switzerland, England and Argentina ; and 10 Math centres in United States of America. Besides the general preaching work in India and abroad, works of service done by some of the important institutions are as follows : In the 11 in-door hospitals, some of them doing specialized work in Maternity, Tuberculosis and Psychiatry and Cancer, 1,259 beds were maintained and 24,833 patients accommodated. In the 65 dispensaries, 29,76,135 cases were attended to. In the educational field there were two residential colleges and two general colleges having 2,347 students ; 2 B.T. Colleges with 233 students ; 2 Basic Training Schools with 80 boys and 180 girls ; 3 Junior Basic Training Colleges with 200 boys and 64 girls ; 2 Colleges for Physical Education and Rural Education and a School for Agriculture with 100, 103 and 61 students respectively ; 2 Social Educational Organizers Training Centre with 261 students ; 4 Engineering Schools with 1,609 students ; 8 Junior Technical or Industrial Schools with 662 boys and 36 girls ; 84 Students Homes or Hostels including Orphanages with 7,343 boys and 652 girls ; 4 Sanskrit

Schools with 67 students ; 12 Multi-Purpose Higher Secondary Schools with 4,832 boys and 339 girls ; 18 High and Secondary Schools with 6,134 boys and 5,097 girls ; 35 Senior Basic and M.E. Schools with 5,312 boys and 4,546 girls ; 9 Higher Secondary Schools with 3,453 boys and 1,781 girls ; 51 Junior Basic and Elementary Schools with 6,708 boys and 2,800 girls ; 63 Lower and other grades Schools with 3,046 boys and 2,877 girls ; one Post-Graduate Basic Training College with 112 trainees ; an Arts College with 170 students ; and 2 Nursing Schools with 163 pupil nurses. There are Math centres at Mayavati, Calcutta, Madras, Nagpur, Mysore and Trichur publishing a vast body of literature covering the works of Swami Vivekananda, Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, Lives of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, scriptural translations in general and several original works. Particular mention has also to be made of the Cultural Institute at Calcutta, which has become an institute of international importance.

This brief survey of the work during 1964 will show the extent and variety of it. While there are also a large body of lay workers, honorary and paid, available for running these institutions, the main responsibility of management and of raising the necessary funds falls on the members of the monastic Brotherhood. To cope with it a successful member of the monastic Order is required to combine in himself many-sided abilities. He must have the ability of an efficient civil servant, the erudition and expressiveness of a learned professor, the sociability and attractiveness of a genuine humanitarian, and above all the spirit of renunciation, devotion and serenity of a true philosopher and lover of God. To be a combination of Jñāna, Bhakti, Yoga and Karma, which Swamiji expected his monks to be, is nothing short of that.

An organization, like a State, however requires not only geniuses but ordinary folk, not only leaders but followers also. In the Brotherhood all are therefore welcome, talented and highly qualified persons as also medio-

crs, provided they are attracted by the idea of living a life of renunciation and service. Renunciation implies the eschewal of personal ambitions, family relations, possessions, luxury and sex. An individual can practise renunciation only if the urges mentioned before find fulfilment in the higher satisfaction which devotional life offers. Service implies the dedication of one's energies and capacities to the works of the Organization conceiving it as a symbol of the Master. Spiritual talents are therefore more important than worldly abilities, but by the very nature and object of the Organization a harmonious combination of both is the ideal.

Monastic life, therefore, offers to persons having the required temperament, the best opportunity of developing their capacities and of living their lives in a way that will be of maximum benefit to themselves and the world at large. The conditions of life in the Brotherhood are such that any one with the right temperament can easily adjust himself to them. In the matter of food, clothing and housing, simplicity, no doubt, is the rule, but conditions are not prohibitively austere. Middle class standards obtaining in the country are generally observed in these matters in the Math. Though the monks have no salaries or any other kind of personal income, all their legitimate needs in life are met by the institutions in which they work. The monastic vow of poverty therefore does not mean penury and indigence. So also obedience and discipline, while being fundamental in the monastic code of conduct, are not allowed to degenerate into servility and abjectness. While personal ambition has no place, scope for great achievements are open to persons of ability and courage. Position and status of a much higher order than what a successful worldly career could bring, are often the unsought rewards that pursue a monk who combines in himself devotional spirit with ability and learning. Thus through renunciation one gains much more than what one renounces. Only the return comes unsought and unplanned in the life of a true monk.

Swami Vivekananda lived and preached at a time when India was yet in political bondage. Young men were, therefore, naturally engaged in the struggle for political freedom in the belief that it will solve all our problems. After political independence was attained, we have now come to understand that it has no meaning without economic independence, and the country is, therefore, struggling for that through planning and industrialization. But sooner or later it will be realized that without moral, religious and spiritual freedom — freedom from the animal in man — even economic freedom can offer no solace to the people. It is desirable that at least the more thoughtful sections in the country are prepared to face

this disillusionment sufficiently early. For the attainment of this spiritual freedom the country requires a huge army of workers cast in the mould that Swamiji has prepared through the harmonious combination of Jñāna, Bhakti, Yoga and Karma. The monastic Order is the great legacy he has left to posterity for accomplishing this purpose. Now that the country is independent, there are no patriotic inhibitions standing in the way of the youth taking to a life of spiritual service. It is up to them to harken to the call of Swami Vivekananda, join the Order in large numbers and get their lives moulded for spiritual service in India and abroad. There is no other career more glorious than this for the Indian youth.

EKA-ŚLOKĪ OF ŚAṆKARA

P. K. SUNDARAM

I

BHAGAWĀN ŚAṆKARA was on his mission of spreading the light of truth. One day, when he was on his way, a person suddenly came forward and fell in prostration before him. His body was pale in bloodlessness; his eyes were blind and powerless; his limbs had been eaten away by leprosy; his body was a pit of disease and pain.

Śaṅkara had a look at him. Grace flowed in a steady stream and bathed the leper lying prostrate, in compassion, soothing his sickly soul. Hunted down by misery, forlorn and purblind, the man looked up into empty darkness. Śaṅkara wanted to open his inner eye and the floodgates of central bliss and luminosity, the source of energy and effulgence. He put to him a set of simple questions which the man answered as though in a charmed trance. Slowly and steadily, Śaṅkara drew the man's vision inward till he was face to face with truth.

'O, man, what is the light by which you see during the day?'

'Sir, the sun.'

'At night?'

'Lamps, lightning, the moon.'

'How are the lamps, lightning and moon seen?'

'By the eyes, of course!'

'When the eyes are closed, with what do you see?'

'The mind.'

'Who knows the mind?'

'It is I.'

'Yes, O man, thou art the Supreme Light. After you, everything shines.'

'O Lord, I understand. I am that. *tad asmi*!'

Thus was born the *Eka-Śloki* :

किं ज्योतिस्तव? भानुमान् अहनि मे;

रात्रौ? प्रदीपादिकम्;

स्यादेवं, रविदीप-दर्शन-विधौ

किं ज्योतिः? आख्याहि मे

चक्षुः; तस्य निमीलनादि-समये किम्?

धीः; धियोदर्शने

किं? तत्र अहं; अतो भवान् परमकम्

ज्योतिः; तदस्मि प्रभो ।

II

The method of inversion adopted by Śaṅkara gradually reduces the objectivity of

orientation of mind to pure subjectivity. It spells out the source of knowledge, the root of mental activity. It explores the chain of consequents and tracks down to their ground, from the outwardly physical to the sensory, from the sensory to the mental, and from the mental to the centre, the Self.

Śaṅkara had obviously in mind the conversation between Janaka and Yājñavalkya that occurs in the Jyotir-brāhmaṇa of the Bṛhad-āraṇyaka-Upaniṣad.

‘O Yājñavalkya,’ asked Janaka, ‘When the sun and the moon are set, when fires are out, when even the speech is silenced, what light is it that guides man?’

Yājñavalkya replied: ‘The Self alone is the Light’.

आत्मैव अस्य ज्योतिर्मवति (IV. 3.6.)

When man is awake, his senses function and create contact with the world outside. When he passes into dream, senses are lulled into inactivity; yet he dwells and revels in a world of activity, which, so long as the sojourn in that world continues, is indistinguishable from the world which the senses inform. Without the eyes, the man sees; without ears, hears; meets men and manages materials; weeps and laughs. It is an inner world lighted up by mind. It may not be critical, judged by the standards of the wakeful life, but it is certainly creative. While thus being more ultimate than the senses, the mind is not yet sufficiently ultimate.

It lapses into dreamless sleep, *asvapna-nidrā*. The dualities in which mind functions disappear. Personal identities are lost. Caste and position are forgotten. Yet when the sleep comes to an end, the interregnum of blank is remembered and the peace is recalled. ‘I slept happily; I did not know anything,’ says the person on waking. This memory will arise only if there had been a direct experience of peace and happiness. Perception precedes memory. It presupposes witnessing. Who could be this witness? It is the *sākṣī*, the Witness-Self. Śaṅkara writes:

बीजावस्थापि न किञ्चिदवेदिषं इति उत्थितस्य
प्रत्यय-दर्शनात् देहे अनुभूयते एव ।

However, the bliss that is felt in sleep is due only to the suspension of mind. The possibility of its resumption is not destroyed. That is why sleep is not *samādhi*. It is blissful, but not bliss: आनन्दप्रायः, न आनन्द एव ।

The Witness-Self shines steadily whether other functionaries are at work or not. Senses are not found in dream, and both mind and senses are not found in sleep. Therefore, among them one could not be the cause of the other. That which does not vary when the others pass away is their ground. Like a giant fish, which uninhibited by the force of stream, roams at will, the self travels back and forth amidst the shifting scenes of experience. Or, rather, the kaleidoscopic pageants of life come and go on the still canvas of the Self. Gauḍapāda, hence, said of the self:

त्रिषु घामसु यत्तुल्यं सामान्यं वेत्ति निश्चितः ।

III

The wakeful man is the *Viśva*; the dreaming mind is the *Taijasa*; the sleeping individual is the *Prājña*. The *Viśva* and *Taijasa* are bound by ignorance and its handiworks. The *Prājña*, however, is conditioned by the causal *ajñāna* alone, which conceals the truth still, but fails to distort it. In the first two, there are both non-apprehension and mis-apprehension of truth. In the third, though truth or the Self is not seen, the world ceases to bother. It is mere shapeless mass of sentiency. There is non-apprehension alone.

But the self which is *caturtha* and *caturīya* is all consciousness; for it there is neither setting nor rising. It is eternal awareness which dims not. While it sees everything, it is not seen by anything.

IV

The Muṇḍāka-Upaniṣad declares: There neither the sun nor the moon shines; nor lightning nor fire; only while it shines forth,

everything else sheds light derivatively.

तमेव भान्तं अनुभाति सर्वं
तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ।

That Supreme Light indwells in the heart, ever-luminous and ever-independent. Śaṅkara writes :

तद्धि परं ज्योतिः यदन्यानवभासं आत्मज्योतिः ।

It is by this luminosity that the root of all activity, the *ajñāna* and its products, are manifested. Yet the Self stands aloof, transcendent in its pristine purity. The famous passage in the *Māṇḍūkya-Upaniṣad* declares the paramount felicity of the Self, the *Turiya*, in ringing phrases :

नान्तः प्रज्ञं, न बहिष्प्रज्ञं, नोभयतः प्रज्ञं,
न प्रज्ञानघनं, न प्रज्ञं, नाप्रज्ञम् ।

It is neither internal consciousness, nor external, nor the twilight of the two, nor mere mass of consciousness, nor complete knowledge of details nor unconsciousness.

V

The three *pādas* of the Self, the *jāgarita-sthāna-viśva* (the wakeful man), the *svapna-sthāna-taijasa* (the dream-self), and the *suṣupta-sthāna-prājña* (the individual in deep sleep) are expressed symbolically in the three *mātrās* of *Om*, viz., अ, उ and म. The same *mātrās* also signify Reality as expressed in its macrocosmic forms. The totality of extended universe is *Virāṭ* or *Vaiśvānara* and is the visible expression and corresponds to the individual manifestation called *Viśva*. The world-soul, that keeps the worlds together and indwells as the cosmic mind is the *Hiraṇyagarbha* or *sūtrātman*, and corresponds to the *Taijasa*. The Supreme Lord who creates, sustains and dissolves the world is *Īśvara* and corresponds to the *Prājña*.

The three *mātrās* of *Om* denote respectively the individual and cosmic forms of Reality.

ओंकारं पादशो विद्यात् पादा मात्राः न संशयः ।

The Self, the *Turiya*, is the fourth *Pāda* and

that is how *Ātman* becomes *catuspād*. Strictly the four *Pādas* are not different parts of *Ātman* like the four legs of a cow. Rather, the *Pādas* are to be conceived on the analogy of the quarters of a coin. All the three quarters merge in the fourth and the fourth is not one quarter among quarters, but the whole.

The great *Ātman* is easily meditated on through *Om*, the *praṇavākṣara*. It is the nearest *ālambana* to *Brahman* or *Ātman*. *Praśna-upaniṣad* says :

नेदिष्टं हि आलम्बनं ओंकारो ब्रह्मणः । (V. 2.).

Gauḍapāda declares that *Praṇava* is the Abode of Fearlessness : प्रणवो ब्रह्म निर्भयम् ।

This is a great *Vidyā*, *Omkārasypādaśo-vidyā*, condensing in *mātrās* the Supreme truth of Oneness or *Advaita*. Here is the *vyāṣṭi-samaṣṭi* correlation : (1) अ — *Viśva* and *Virāṭ* (2) उ — *Taijasa* and *Hiraṇyagarbha* (3) म — *Prājña* and *Īśvara*.

The silence that follows 'm' is really *a-mātrā*, or *ardha-mātrā* or *ananta-mātrā* and is the *summum bonum*. While the first *mātrā* leads to the second, the second to the third, the third to the fourth, the fourth is an end in itself. It is the *Ātman*, the *Brahman*. The meditation on *Om* encompasses in one sweep the twin manifestations of Reality and results in consummate wisdom. That is why the *Maitrī-upaniṣad* asks us to meditate on *Om*, the *Praṇava* :

ओं इति आत्मानं उपासीत (VI. 3.)

VI

The *Ekaśloki* becomes very important by the fact that in it occurs both the *upadéśa-mahāvākya* and the *anubhava-mahāvākya*. Says the *Bhagwān* : अतो भवान् परमकं ज्योतिः । The disciple receives it and answers : तदस्मि । These two texts correspond to the *tat-tvam-asi* and *aham-brahmāsmi*, the great texts of identity. In this short poem, Śaṅkara has incorporated the *Chāndogya* text of Instruction and the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text of Experience.

Nay, even the other *mahāvākyas*, प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म and अयं आत्मा ब्रह्म are more or less explicitly apparent in the last line. The परमकं ज्योतिः, when located in भवान्, answers to प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म. The entire brunt of the teaching is, of course अयं आत्मा ब्रह्म. Thus, this

Ekaśloki is the quintessence of all the Vedas and the Upaniṣads.¹

¹ In the *Sataśloki*, too, Ācārya Saṅkara has given us a verse very much like the *Ekaśloki*. See verse 95 of *Sataśloki*.

MEMOIRS OF SWAMI ADBHUTANANDA

(A free translation of the Bengali book *Smritikatha*)

(Continued from the previous issue)

THE last days of Lātu Maharaj have been very beautifully described by Hari Maharaj in his letter dated 25-4-1920. 'You must have got the wire informing you about the passing away of Lātu Maharaj. Such a final exit from the world is rarely met with. Of late he was generally indrawn. Since the beginning of the disease he was found always in meditation, his eyes fixed on the junction of the brows, completely withdrawn from everything of the external world, fully alert and conscious, yet entirely oblivious of the world outside. One day when the doctor was dressing the wound he asked me, "What is the disease? What do the doctors say?" I replied, "Nothing serious, only general weakness. Taking no food you have wasted your body. Now you cannot move. If you start taking food, you will regain strength, and the disease will vanish". He said, "It is good that the body goes". I said, "You should not say that. Let Master's will be done". "I know that, but you are all suffering so much for this body." After that he did not talk much.

'Now and then he used to call Paśupati to his side. He took food from his hands. When sometimes he would not like to take food, Paśupati would say he also would not. Then he would take a little. But the night previous to his passing away he refused to take anything. When Paśupati said he also would not eat. Out came the reply "Don't take"—a

reply that indicated that the last loose knot of Māyā had also been cut asunder.

'Next morning when I visited, I saw his temperature high. I felt the pulse. There were no beats. The physician came and examined the heart, but could not get any sound. Temperature 102.6. But there was no change in his consciousness though there were no external movements. There was one motion early morning—the stool was healthy. Other days he used to sit, today he could not. After a good deal of persuasion he took a few drops of pomegranate juice and water. When milk was offered he showed his displeasure. When Lord Viśwanātha's *charaṇāmṛta* was offered he took it with great pleasure. On his head and forehead ice and Eau-de-Cologne were being applied. I took my leave at 10 a.m. and promised to come at 4 p.m. When I finished my bath and meal and was about to take a little rest news reached me of his passing away at 12.10 p.m. Immediately I asked the Sevashrama people to send wire to you and Sarat and started for the Hadar Bag house.

'Going there I saw him lying on his right side with the left hand resting on the side pillow, as if he was sleeping. When I touched his body I found it as hot as when the fever was on. Who will say that he was sleeping the eternal sleep—his face was bright, and calmer than ever. Most people of the two

Ashramas were present, loud fervent singing of the Lord's name was started and it continued for three hours. At 4.30 p.m. his body was seated in a squatting posture and after performing *puja* and *āratrika* was brought downstairs.

'When he was seated up and *puja* etc., were being performed the expression on his face was so beautiful that I cannot express it. I have never seen his eyes so full of peace, mercy and bliss as they were then. His eyes were generally half-closed. But now they were wide open; and what love, joy, and what equanimity and fraternity were beaming out of his eyes beggars all description. Whoever saw them were simply bewitched. The beams of bliss coming out of the eyes appeared to be blessing all in a gladsome farewell. The scene was wonderful, charming,—touching one's heart to the core. The Lord, it appears, has shown us this scene in order to fulfil the true significance of his name, Adbhutananda (one of unprecedented bliss). When his body and bed were covered with new sheets of cloth and the body decorated with garland and sandal-paste the entire scene and atmosphere assumed such a sublime beauty that whoever saw it were filled with amazement and cried out automatically "Blessed, blessed is the soul indeed". Unique and unprecedented was this death-conquering march of Lātu Maharaj. A clear manifestation, a bright example of the infinite glory of the Master! All who gathered there, neighbours and others, Hindus and Mussalmans, had their satisfaction of seeing him for the last time. Then the Sannyasin devotees

of the Master bore him on their shoulders to the Kedarghat; from there, by boat, he was taken to the Manikarnika ghat. There the last *puja* etc., were duly performed and then the body was taken to mid-Ganga where it was immersed with due reverence. Those who have seen the body of Lātu Maharaj beaming forth supreme bliss all around on this last occasion were deeply impressed with the reality of the spiritual world. Blessed is Guru Maharaj, blessed is his disciple, our Lātu Maharaj. . .'

Swami Abhedananda wrote, 'In San Francisco I was meditating when all on a sudden, I heard someone calling me "Kali, Kali, Kali". And with this sound a face appeared indistinctly. The face and the voice seemed to be known yet I failed to recognize. (Was there some perceptible transformation in his body during his last days?) Next day I got a cable from Swami Saradananda that Lātu Maharaj gave up his body in *samādhi* the previous day. Then I was sure that the voice I had heard yesterday during the meditation and the face I saw were Lātu Maharaj's. Immediately I cabled \$ 100 to Saradananda for his *bhandara*.

' . . . Lātu Maharaj was indeed the greatest miracle performed by Sri Ramakrishna. Swami Vivekananda once said, "Each disciple of Sri Ramakrishna is original or nothing." How far these words of the great Swami were true is well borne out by Lātu Maharaj. We take pride in our having such a *gurubhai*.'

Hari Om Tat Sat

APPENDIX

There seems to be something unique or peculiar in the make of a great soul's character. In the case of the great austere *sādhaka*, that Lātu Maharaj undoubtedly was, there was an overdose of this peculiarity. It would not be an exaggeration to say that everything in and around him was peculiar, odd—he was a summation of a large number of oddities. In some respects he was

harder than granite, in others softer than a rose-petal. It is not easy to find out the principle, standard or ideal, referring to which one can say with any degree of certainty that he would be hard in this case or soft in that. To come in contact with Swami Adbhutananda is to live in a wonderland. But this does not mean that there was no principle behind that life. Whatever he said and did had such a

beauty and grace of setting that the individual acts can never be called whimsical or unprincipled. Our inability or difficulty in finding out the thread running through the beautiful flowers of the garland, stems from the fact that his mind ever dwelt on such an Elysian height and ours on this low level of the muddy earth that we don't find anything common between his principles and ours, or even if we do we pass it by as something unbelievable. His was a perfectly unified life, whose heart beat in unison with the Cosmic Heart. Ours, torn by hundred and one desires, are multiple spirit-personalities, not at ease with ourselves, not to speak of being so with others. How is it possible for us to find out that universal unified formula governing his wishes and acts? Still this attempt of ours to analyse the incidents of his life with a view to understanding their basic principles is rewarding to a degree, is self-purifying, self-transcending.

One day at Dakshineswar, when the mind of the Master was just returning from the *samādhi* state to the normal consciousness, but still was far above it, he declared 'Leto, my child, there will come a day when from your (illiterate) mouth will gush out the truths embedded in the Vedas and the Vedānta'. That prophecy from the transcendental sphere shall have to come true — it did become historic. From his lips used to come out life-giving truths which were from none else but the Master's — truths that used to satiate the thirst of persons seeking the ultimate Truth. Atulbābu, brother of Girish Ghosh, used to say, 'If you want to see the greatest miracle of our Master, Sri Ramakrishna, look at Lātu Maharaj'. Every one who knows Lātu Maharaj or tries to understand this wonderful life will bear out the words of Atulbābu fully.

The great Pandit Vishnu Tarkaratna once said, 'I derive very great joy and satisfaction to hear great spiritual truths being explained so simply and lucidly by this illiterate *sādhu*, Lātu Maharaj. And with it also we come to understand the glory of our Master, Sri Ramakrishna'. This is because his understanding of the spiritual truths was not born of wide

scholarship, of studies of scriptures, commentaries, etc., but of direct apprehension of those truths through deep thinking and meditation based on *brahmacharya* and austere discipline. We lived with this great soul for a long time, tried our best to understand him, analysed his actions and sayings in the light of modern thoughts; yet he remained a mystery to us, a power and blessing unfathomed and unfathomable, despite his challenging frankness and open heart. Some really used to think, 'Who is this man, dazzling with the glory and splendour of Sri Ramakrishna? Is he really that shepherd and cow-boy, Rākhturām of Bihar, transformed by the grace of Sri Ramakrishna into Adbhutananda? Is it ever possible?'

Whether in Kaśī or in Calcutta, whenever a complex religious or spiritual problem was raised Lātu Maharaj used to make it clear as crystal in his simple half-*patois* language. Sometimes such words and expressions would come out of his mouth, which in their verbal beauty, cadence and import, would startle us; his face and body will be aglow with enthusiasm that used to keep the audience spell-bound. What was still more striking was his flow of thought that appeared unending. Garbed in simple language would come out thoughts that were the combined result of deep thinking, wide experience, and direct realization — a rare combination of heaven and earth. Whatever he said had the impress of power and wisdom, running through which there would always be found a deep universal love and endeavour for taking each and all towards the only goal of human life, God-realization. As we would hear him, our minds, unbeknown to ourselves, would soar higher to an unknown region of peace and bliss, far above the trials and tribulations of this mortal world of ours. The glow of smile that used to illumine his face during those talks is still a loving treasure to us. In his unshakable faith in the *guru*, in his deep devotion to and reverence for God, in his unlimited love for humanity, in his austere sacrifice and renunciation, this seraphic soul has been and will ever be our beacon-light in this too erring life of ours.

Even the little things of his life used to bring to us news of immortal region, bringing peace to disquiet, hopes to drooping hearts. This silent and quiet anchorite was in reality a dynamo of tremendous activity all directed towards the spiritual uplift of mankind. Hiding his deep spiritual knowledge under the guise of illiteracy — knowledge born of the grace of his divine *guru* and worked up by his own tireless austerities to the end of his life — he used to give fullest satisfaction to seekers of Truth and devotion to God. Himself suffused with a seraphic love, he used to mellow our lives with its nectar.

Fault-finding was foreign to him. He wore a peculiar magnifying glass to look at another's virtue — a drop appeared to him as an ocean. He could not bear any talk about another's defects; to criticize others within his hearing was impossible. 'One who speaks ill of his *guru* and God is extremely impure in heart. Such people are farthest away from God, they can never be spiritual', he used to say. One day, seeing this fault in the character of the present author, he said, 'It is only the impure people who see faults and impurities in others. To the pure ones others' virtues appear in glowing colours. You people have not the eyes to see virtues in others. You have learnt only one lesson in life — to find others' faults. This jealousy is retarding the spiritual progress of yours. Inside there is jealousy, malice, outside you have the religious mark on your forehead and you hold a rosary in your hand. Of what help will it be to you?' One may observe in the above remark his strong whip-hand. But how much love and sympathy and good will was hidden there ordinary people did not know — only those who tasted the strength of the whip-hand had the luck of tasting the love that moved the hand. One day I made bold to speak out to him, 'Now, Maharaj, I am in the charge of an expert coachman. You know well how to break a rebel horse. Unless it is well broken it will not be fit to be harnessed to your vehicle'. He turned the table on me and said, 'You know, Siva rides a bull and Siva is supreme knowledge personified. Can a beast be

a carrier of knowledge? Knowledge and ignorance cannot live together. Though in appearance Siva's bull is an animal, blessed indeed is he'.

People would often see Lātu Maharaj muttering something to himself. One day I concentrated my attention to grasp what he was saying; he was chiding himself: 'To call oneself a *sādhu* as long as the last vestige of egoism is not wiped off! All cannot attain the stage of Nityananda (who found in him nothing but Gauranga and seemed to have egoism, which in reality was not his but Sri Gauranga's). Does one become a *sādhu* by donning the ochre cloth alone? It is useless for a *sādhu* to dye his cloth if his mind is not dyed with the colour, of dispassion and renunciation, of God Himself. Has this wearing of red cloth given me the power and prerogative of extorting obedience of others that I claim to give instruction to them?' This was all to himself, and, then when he saw me straining my ears to hear him, he said, 'You see, if somebody criticizes a *sādhu* at once the hood of egotism is unfurled automatically. To give up other things is comparatively easy for a *sādhu*; but this egotism of being a *sādhu* is very difficult to renounce. There a *sādhu's* progress suffers shipwreck. You might have observed that on the surface of the Ganga float by garlands of flowers as well as rotten animal carcasses; Ganga allows all to flow on, herself remaining as pure and holy as ever. A *sādhu's* mind should be like this Ganga-water, unsullied by praise or censure. They say "If the mind is ever alert and attuned to the Lord even a mud-puddle is Ganga". This is the mind of an ideal *sādhu*. How many of the *sādhus* have attained the state of Śuka and Jadabharata that if people scoff at or abuse, if they throw mud and dust, they will remain calm and unperturbed? A real *sādhu* is one into whose serenity praise or censure makes no dent'.

Observing a devotee's excessive attachment towards worldly enjoyment, Lātu Maharaj once said, 'You see, when your minds are warped, and acts are crooked, I

suffer great pain. Had your love for me been genuine could you have inflicted such pain on me? Your love for the *sādhu* is only lip-deep, otherwise how is it that you do not follow one of his instructions? You have not married and yet you cannot give up your desire to see the dance performances of bad characters in the theatres. You know, those who prepare themselves for leading a monk's life should be so strict in their external behaviour as not to look at a doll or pictures of women far less of one in a bad posture. If your self-restraint in the beginning goes so far as that, then only you will be able to lead a pure life and enjoy the blessedness of it. When you are ascending a staircase your eyes should always be at a higher level than where your feet are and you should, now and then, look up to the goal, to prevent deviation, long before a wrong step is actually taken. Similarly you should bestow your full attention on ensuring that each step you take is in the right direction, fixing your mind on the Lord and on the process of enthroning Him in your heart. If you look down, look on woman and wealth, you will slip and have a fall'.

Lātu Maharaj had two ways of imparting instructions, indirectly through jokes and gibes and directly through mild scolding. Indiscriminate imitation of others (which he used to say 'copy' others), idling away one's time, harming others — against all these he used his direct method. His pointed forceful words (where did they gush out from at such

times we do not know) acted on our hearts like bayonet jabs; but instead of drooping, our spirit used to rouse our latent powers and enable us to overcome the defects — we were roused to a new consciousness, determined to lead a nobler life. But all these sharp reproofs had but one aim, our spiritual uplift, therefore they were so sweet and loving. One day I could not resist the temptation of expressing my gratitude to him in the following way: 'Maharaj, your sharp scoldings are chocolates in the shape of bayonets, they are so sweet, so loving. Parents also scold for the good of the children; but your chidings are sweeter still; parents cannot bestow so much love on us. Where will they get such overwhelming good will for the flowering of our spiritual life? You have girded up your loins to make men of us, all your actions and utterances are directed towards that one end. It is for this reason that they appeal to our hearts so irresistibly. Cynics and atheists like ourselves are awakened with a rude shock and the journey is resumed afresh. Please know your words of criticism never pain us. The mercy that you bestow on us is simply unspeakable. Girishbabu once said, "In this deep dark world of ours, great souls alone are our guiding stars". To travellers like ourselves, faint of heart and waylaid, mad and intoxicated, the bright steady light of yours is our only hope and guide. We are sure, under your guidance we will surely be men'.

(To be concluded)

Freedom is the first condition of growth. What you do not make free, will never grow. The idea that you can make others grow, and help their growth, that you can direct and guide them, always retaining for yourself the freedom of the teacher, is nonsense, a dangerous lie, which has retarded the growth of millions and millions of human beings in this world. Let man have the light of liberty. That is the only condition of growth. . . . Through freedom the sciences were built.

* * * *

All human knowledge proceeds out of experience; we cannot know anything except by experience. All our reasoning is based upon generalized experience, all our knowledge is but harmonized experience.

— SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

SWAMI PRABHANANDA

IN the field of education 'morals and religion' constitute a delicately sensitive area and most people delegated with the responsibility of executing educational programmes would rather bypass this sensitive zone than face boldly the challengingly significant constituent of character-education. They have much reason to do so. The introduction of the concepts of democracy and secularism has added to the already existing chaos in educational thought, particularly because of the fact that the neo-democrats of young India have not been able to take a stable attitude towards religion. However, following in the footsteps of leaders of national importance like Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Indian education, it may be seen, is committed to character-building, in accordance with the nation's spiritual heritage, as one of its chief aims. Educationists here, therefore, feel constrained to look into the various factors, directly and indirectly responsible for such a character-education. Willynilly they have to peep into recesses of morality and religion which even modern secularists hesitatingly admit to be vital in character education. Prof. Arnold Toynbee's note of warning forces educationists all the more to re-evaluate the successes and failures of man of today to determine his future. He writes, 'The tragedy of human affairs is that we have been brilliantly successful in mastering non-human nature, but have been relatively unsuccessful in the much more important human business of getting on with each other. As the advance of science and technology has accelerated, the gulf between our intellectual and our moral achievements has been widening, till to-day this discrepancy is threatening the human race with the doom of self-destruction'. A cursory glance into the field of education, however, reveals two distinctively diverse trends. One school of

thought upheld by secularist and humanist, declares that character and moral education can be given without even a mention of religion. The other led by the theologians, who claim that morals being divinely ordained must be based on religion. This has been aptly voiced by Theodore M. Green in 'Religion and the Philosophies of education'. According to him, 'A dogmatic religious faith and a dogmatic secular philosophy of education are bound to be mortal enemies but religion and education in proportion as they are honest, informed and humble—that is truly liberal—are natural allies'.

Most of us tread warily whenever anyone suggests that religious practice be brought into the precincts of education. It is because of the fact that never before has religion been subjected to such rational bombardment as it has been recently, shaking the foundation of all belief. We live in a situation where any traditional religious interpretation of life is contrary to the main stream of thought and belief. But a thinking man frustrated in the whirlpool of the scientific and commercial developments of today, discovers that religion has entered profoundly into the life of the past and that it offers a mode of thought and action that has relevance to the present. It may be interesting to refer to the results of a recent survey into public opinion on the statutory religious arrangements in England. From 86 to 93 per cent of the adult population were in favour of their continuance (the percentage varies slightly according to age group) and over 90 percent of primary and secondary school children wanted religious instruction to go on as it is.

Though the committee on Religious and Moral Instruction (1959—60) appointed by the Government of India observed, 'Many of the ills in the educational world and in society

as a whole today are mainly due to the gradual disappearance of the hold of religion on the people,' Indian education has not perhaps moved a step forward beyond what the Religious Education Committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education (1945) had to say on the subject. The Board resolved, 'While we recognize the fundamental importance of spiritual and moral instruction in the building of character, the provision for such teaching, except in so far as it can be provided in the normal course of secular instruction, should be the responsibility of the home and the community to which the pupil belongs'. In a pluralistic society we need a non-sectarian but comprehensive approach when we want to rehabilitate religion in public schools. An 'agreed syllabus' may include the essential principles common to all religions but can hardly satisfy the followers of any particular faith. A harmony among religions, even though it may be brought about at a philosophical level, can hardly accommodate the widely diverging ideas held by different religious groups at the level of rituals and mythology which constitute the flesh and blood of religions in practice. The serious difficulty encountered here has been mentioned in the editorial comments of the *Times Educational Supplement*, dated April 8, 1966 when it discussed the present state of affairs of religious education in England. It writes, 'The whole trouble about the religion of the 1944 Act is that it stops short of the church door. It is against the spirit of the Act to urge a child to join a specific church. But Christianity is a religion which needs to be lived in a church community, and the weakness of religion as mediated by the Act is that it is religion without church'. What is true of Christianity is true of all old and traditional religions, and similar protests have been voiced by professionals whenever some synthetic approach to the solution was attempted.

It would be rather foolish to brush aside religion merely because it has proved difficult to incorporate traditional beliefs in the modern way of life. When most people opine that

broad-based religious thoughts should find an important place in the formal and informal education provided by public schools, attempts should be made, not by clergy alone but by educationists in general, to explore in what form and how religion can be ushered in the school premises.

So long as a child lives in direct contact with a living and dynamic environment he is exposed to the process of character education; for a suitable educational environment is pregnant with immense possibilities of influencing a child's conduct in a definite way. Certain agencies are there—the family, the school and the state—and they are directly responsible for imparting character education. Other social institutions, too, have their share in influencing the life and character of an individual. We should understand that character promotion is as much a product of the interaction of a person with his environment as walking is an interaction of legs with a physical environment. Over and above this interaction, the intra-action within the individual is no less responsible for the growth of values, beliefs and attitudes. The growth of a child into a personality may be compared with a plant which, though it has a distinctive entity is entirely dependent on sunlight and soil. The plant, gathering its food and strength from its immediate surroundings grows up into a particular tree of a definite species.

Now, the school, as an agency for imparting moral and religious education, has its scope and its limitations. When we argue over the rights and obligations of school we tend to overlook certain basic facts. The school is not a legislative body that makes laws, nor is it an executive agency that carries them out nor a judicial agency that upholds its legal merits. The school is not a family. It is not a church and it has no divine authorization. Nor is it an industry, for it does not produce, transport or distribute material goods however much it may be instrumental thereof. The school is fundamentally an institution erected by society to do a certain specific function in maintaining the continuance and advancement of

society. But it remains a fact that the school with its tremendously powerful tool of education is in a position to influence growing children directly and mould the life and character of the individual. While other agencies provide learning opportunities incidentally to other functions that are primary to them, the school's primary concern is with imparting education. Other agencies educate informally, the school is committed to educate the pupils under its charge formally, not forgetting, however, the immense opportunity for informal education with which the school is provided. This is true of education in academic subjects as well as of moral and religious education. Again, instruction in academic subjects may be assessed through tests, whereas the style of behaviour or behaviour syndrome in which a person acts out in a distinctive way, which might be given mostly by the school, cannot be observed readily through tests. Therefore, moral and religious education taken up assiduously by the school cannot immediately be put to test, thus allowing an insincere teacher to neglect his duties. This, again, reminds a serious teacher that the habits and attitudes that he has helped to build up in a child may come to full fruition at a much later date and possibly in a much more vigorous form than might have been conceived by him who was responsible for them. This far-reaching consequence makes the conscientious teacher alert to what he is teaching and how he is teaching.

From all practical points of view the school may utilize its three distinctly significant resources. The first one is the formal education with a planned syllabus and carefully considered method of instruction followed usually by testing. The second is the educational surroundings *vis-a-vis* the physical set-up of the school, the administration etc., which are primarily for a distinctive purpose of their own, yet contribute incidentally their share in imparting moral and religious education. Some hold the view that this kind of informal approach impinges strongly on the young mind leaving behind permanent changes in the behaviour pattern of the student. That is why

teachers are always on their guard lest environment effect adversely the conduct of their charges. The third, but nonetheless important source, may be called education by contagion. The traditions, beliefs and customs which are interwoven in the school life affect, willynilly, every child, and this source, though it acts rather slowly, serves as cementing material in building up the structure of character. The problem with the school lies, not only in utilizing each of these sources but, also, in the rational and balanced use of all the three sources to bring about a harmonious growth towards a definite goal.

What a school can do about moral and religious education, exploiting its various resources will be determined by what moral and religious objective the school holds. There are two divergent opinions. The secularist thinks that morals have a naturalistic origin in the folkways and mores of the community. Here the pressure to lead a good life comes from the social group—the class, the school, the home and the like. To the theologian, the social pressure and individual habituation it represents are good but insufficient by themselves. The oughtness of moral duty rests on man's obligation to obey the divine command, for God as the supreme law-giver and eternal judge ultimately guarantees moral conduct. It seems the educationist has either to submit to this view or that, neither of which however seems satisfactory. A humanist puts his confidence in man and man's experiences though he would assert that all education has religious overtones and implications. To the educationist, groping in darkness in search of a sound foundation in scientific outlook and human experience which at the same time provides for the highest aspirations of man, Swami Vivekananda has offered a solution. To quote Swami Vivekananda :

Every religion preaches that the essence of all morality is to do good to others. And why? Be unselfish. And why should I? Some God has said it? He is not for me; let them all tell it. And if they do, what is it to me? Each one for himself, and somebody take the hindmost; that is all

the morality in the world, at least with many. What is the reason that I should be moral? You cannot explain it except when you come to know the truth as given in the *Gita*: 'He who sees everyone in himself, and himself in everyone, thus seeking the same God living in all, he, the sage, no more kills the Self by the self'. Know through Advaita that whomsoever you hurt, you hurt yourself; they are all you. Whether you know it or not, through all hands you work, through all feet you move, you are the king enjoying himself in the palace, you are the beggar leading that miserable existence in the street; you are in the ignorant as well as in the learned; you are the man who is weak, and you are in the strong. Know this and be sympathetic. And that is why we must not hurt others.—*Complete Works*, Vol. III, p. 425.

Herein the humanist may feel relieved to find a satisfactory solution to his heart's desire. He finds that such a synthetic approach helps children to build up moral character which keeps the door open to spiritual growth of the highest order. Needless it is to mention that a spiritual man must be moral, but a moral man is not necessarily spiritual. To be moral, however, is a stepping stone to spiritual growth. Those who do not care for religion seek an answer to the question, why morals should not be taught apart from religion. Others who demand religion be taught over and beyond morals, again, differ among themselves; some think of religion in broad humanistic terms while others think only in terms of the supernatural. Without dilating on the details, it may be mentioned here that an Advaitin faces up to and answers these questions and presents a large panoramic view providing room for the so-called secularist, the humanist and the religionist. And the Vedantic view can, also, fulfil the demand of the Mudaliar Commission which states, 'the supreme end of the educative process should be the training of the character and personality of students in such a way that they will be able to realize their full potentialities and contribute to the well-being of the community'. Here the Vedanta holds that morality without its base in spirituality is sterile, defunct and cannot serve as a drive for man's genuine progress.

To the question as to how to impart moral and religious education to the child, most educators agree that efforts at moral education, whether they be direct or indirect, will prove abortive unless the child is provided with opportunity to practise what the school or home preaches. The best way to learn fair-play is to play fair. While most educators have discarded direct instruction some interesting experiments to foster moral education through direct means are afoot. It should be admitted, however, that the influence of direct moral and religious instructions, even at its best, is comparatively small in amount when the whole field of moral growth through education is taken into account. The effort at imparting direct moral instruction, when analysed, reveals that moral instructions are but instructions about morals. The teacher takes up the holy task of imparting moral and religious ideas to his charges in the good faith that they will become moving ideas, motive forces in the guidance of the conduct of children. Here, we may recount Dewey's note of warning. 'There is nothing in the nature of ideas about morality, of information about honesty or purity or kindness which automatically transmutes such ideas into good character or good conduct.' The optimistic teacher should be aware of this when he separates ideas which he wants to distribute among the children. He sorts out the moral ideas from the amoral and non-moral ideas. Moral ideas are ideas of any sort, pieces of information that influence conduct and improve it, make it better than it otherwise would be. The arduous teacher discards such ideas which may affect children's conduct adversely. The eager teacher helps the child to build up a tendency or disposition to guide his choice by a desire to do what is right, and to choose what he does choose because he judges it to be right.

Some educators prescribe teaching of morals but not ethics to children, for, they opine, premature emphasis on ethics may impede healthy moral development. They make the distinction that morals emphasize performance while ethics stress knowledge. Even without

working out the niceties of the demarcation between ethics and morals, emphasis should be laid on the integrated and balanced approach to the problem. Educators should focus their attention on bringing down to the ground the ideas about morals and spirituality which, unfortunately, float mostly in the air. They should explore the resources available and evolve some definite working programme followed up by scientific evaluation. The major resources which interplay under more or less controlled situations are (a) the school as a social institution, (b) the method of learning and doing work to try out the ideas and (c) the school curriculum. It is evident that moral growth is not possible without the support of a moral environment. The child undergoing training is purposefully kept away from vital contact with the normal social life where he has to establish himself in later life. The child is placed in the controlled situation of an educational institution with two major premises to support it. (a) In a controlled situation the learning and behaviour of children may occur efficiently according to a definite plan so that when the child grows into an adult successful 'transfer of training' will enable him to meet squarely the challenge of life. (b) Education being the most powerful tool for preserving traditional values and at the same time for social change in a direction compatible with these values, the society wants to utilize consciously the school for this purpose.

Moral and religious education, it may be surmised, consists in the art of deliberating, judging, weighing and criticizing with knowledge about ways and means. The knowledge portion, so far as its content and method of instruction are concerned, presents no special problem, particularly because of the fact that its outcome may be tested and readjusted accordingly. Use of this knowledge, however, poses various problems. The school should provide wide scope for deliberative tasks, which need mental discipline combined with the skill for executing the moral and religious ideas. Recent experiments in the field of sociology and education suggest that most of

these tasks may be evaluated and may be corrected, if and when necessary. The key to a character with a sound moral and spiritual background is to present to the youth positive ethics — telling them what to do and challenging them to build up a moral and spiritual growth with a positive approach. Discovering what are right and wrong things to do should be followed by performance as well as the will to do right. Children should be helped to build up the courage, the will and the skill to live up to the conviction that they will gradually lead them for the progressive growth of the individual and welfare of society. More important than conviction are the determination and ability to execute what one honestly believes. To strengthen this the child should be taught and be given enough practice to invest his emotional energies in positive directions to build up healthy attitudes, beneficial sentiments and noble idealism. But while we are directing our attention towards fostering virtues, glorifying a moral catalogue, we should not overlook some inherent snags. Virtues like industry, patience, courage, etc., cultivated by criminals as well as law-abiding citizens, are indicative of an efficient rather than a good will. It is not so much specific virtues but an effective integration of virtues directed towards some central purpose that should govern the curriculum in moral and religious education. The school environment with all its resources of formal and informal education should be utilized to help the child to build up the edifice of his character.

Another note of warning from the psychologist points out that the conventional learning curve in secular education does not apply to cases of learning religious and moral education. Brabucher explains,

'one's effort to do the right does not fall short for want of habits or organization and control, for it is of the very nature of right, always to be within reach. If it were not within reach, it could exert no moral obligation on the individual. Failure to do what is within reach, therefore, must be due to lack of will to reach for the right. . . . If the individual is under obligation to do right, then he ought to do it the first time. He should need no

practice. Hence there is no law or curve in learning for morality as there is in the secular branches'.

Habits of organization and control, though they do not help directly in deliberating the right, contribute immensely to reinforce the ability to execute what one thinks right and strengthen the will to do right and it is here that the teacher finds his role to play.

All knowledge must in some way affect conduct. Children act as they are taught or as society lets them teach themselves. The essential virtues of moral and spiritual life have to be implanted in children, and they should not be left aside in the hope that, circumstances favouring, they will be caught. Moral concern is now both more urgent and more perplexing than ever before. The complexities of modern life and the ever-increasing power made available through science and

technology demand ethical controls of greater strength than ever before. The school, by virtue of its social status, can do much, and definitely more than it has done so far, to utilize the rich resources of moral and religious education. Education is as old as man, but its importance in human society has been only partially appreciated. Education is generally utilized as a means to individual advancement and to an increase in the nation's reserves of wealth. But there is a deeper function which educational institutions have to discharge to meet the challenging need of the day. These are to preserve the traditional values and at the same time to promote social changes befitting these values. This consideration to bring about character-education veering round the traditional values, which is but spirituality, should find more attention than it has received so far.

SADHANA IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

P. NAGARAJA RAO

ALL the Indian philosophical systems exhibit a twofold unity of outlook. There is first the 'spiritual unity' in their outlook. This is brought out clearly by the common philosophical ideal of *mokṣa*, which is a spiritual experience, not an intellectual apprehension or an occult vision or a physical ecstasy.

The second is the moral unity in outlook. All the systems, though they give differing accounts of *mokṣa*, are at one in holding that it cannot be attained by mere intellectual study. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* declares that 'the Self cannot be attained by instruction or by intellectual power or even through much hearing' (*nāyam ātmā pravacanena labhyo na medhayā na bahunā śrutena*).¹ The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* reiterates the same verse. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* laments the futility of mere intellectual learning: 'Brood not over the mass of words, for that is mere weariness of

speech' (*nānudhyāyād bahūn śabdān vāco viglāpanam hi tat*).²

Intellectual study and reasoning must be accompanied by moral excellence and ethical virtues. There must be moral discipline before enlightenment. No spiritual realization is possible without a moral *sādhana* (discipline). The insistence on *sādhana* is common to all systems. The *Kaṭha* is emphatic on this point: 'Not he who has not desisted from evil ways, not he who is not tranquil, not he who is not concentrated in mind, not even he whose mind is not composed can reach the Self through right knowledge' (*nāvirato duṣcaritānnāśānto nāsamāhitaḥ nāśānta-mānaso vāpi prajñānenainam āpnuyāt*).³ The importance of the ethical life is insisted on in all the systems. The state of spiritual realization is not contra-ethical; it transcends the ethical.

² *Br. Up.*, 4. 4. 21.

³ *Kaṭha*, 2. 24.

¹ *Kaṭha*, 2. 26; *Muṇḍaka*, 3. 2. 4.

Śaṅkara has put among the four requisites for the study of the Vedānta, the *acquisition of moral virtues* as one. The other three are : discrimination of the Real from the unreal ; non-attachment to the fruits of the earth and heaven ; and the desire for release. The scriptures cannot purify the man whose moral life is not pure. Some systems have insisted on a severe form of self-culture as the true preparation for spiritual realization. For example, Buddhism and Jainism appeal to no extraneous inducements or punishments, no invocation to God. Referring to Buddhism, Whitehead observes that it is 'the most colossal example in history of applied metaphysics'. The Prabhākara school of Mīmāṃsā has elevated the moral good as an end in itself. The author of the great epic Mahābhārata concludes his grand work with this agonizing cry : 'I cry with arms uplifted, yet none heedeth. From righteousness flow forth pleasure and profit. Why then do ye not follow Dharma ?'

Ignorant and ill-informed critics at home and abroad declare that in Indian philosophical systems spiritual realization frees men from moral obligations. This is hardly true if we take into account the lives and work of the Jīvanmuktas (those liberated while still in the body). Moral life implies a constraint in the unregenerate state of man's life. The agent is conscious of his obligations and fulfils them with difficulty. In the Jīvanmuktas there is no strife and tension. In the words of Professor Hiriyanna, 'they do not realize virtue but reveal it'. Their words are wisdom, and their work is consecration. It is only in this sense, that their acts are spontaneous, that they are said to be above the ethical sphere. Only in this restricted sense is the remark that Indian philosophy is beyond logic and beyond ethics true. It certainly is not anti-rational or infra-ethical. Its insistence on the close correlation of the moral and spiritual life has resulted in the unity of philosophy and religion in India.

The Indian philosophical systems insist on the necessity of getting spiritual instruction from a preceptor. All virile spiritual tradi-

tions have proclaimed the necessity of the *guru*. It is no formality or evasion of one's responsibility. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* declares, 'He who has found a preceptor knows'. An illumined teacher teaches a qualified aspirant the methods of realization. He does not broadcast the truth from the housetops. He who wants gold must dig ; the rest must be content with straw. The path is as sharp as a razor's edge. The aspirant must have a tranquil mind, utter detachment and a sharp intelligence.

The *sādhana*s outlined in the different systems are identical in many ways. The first stage is the life of morality lived in a society, discharging all duties and refraining from wrong. The path of ceremonial purity cleanses the mind, without which *mokṣa* is impossible. In the words of William Blake : 'If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything will appear to man as it is, infinite. For man has closed himself up till he sees all things through the narrow chinks of his cavern'.

The discharge of moral duties and the leading of a pure life prepares the aspirant's mind for the message from the illumined teacher. Receiving it is known as *śravaṇa*. Reflection upon it is called *manana*. It is the process of convincing oneself through reflection upon the truth learnt by *śravaṇa*. After *manana*, the aspirant begins to meditate on the truth in an uninterrupted manner till he has a direct experience of the truth. This is called *nidhidhyāsana* ; it transforms mediate knowledge into immediate experience.

The Indian philosophical systems subscribe to a few common doctrines which are integral to their thought. They are : the doctrine of Karma and rebirth ; the eternal, non-created, pure nature of the Soul ; the beginninglessness of the world ; and its moral nature.

The doctrine of Karma brings out a faith in the eternal moral order of the universe. The universe is not a blind unconscious force, nor is it a chance world. It is a moral theatre for the art of soul-making. We are what we have made of ourselves. We suffer for what

we have done. We reap what we sow. The fault is not in our stars, but in ourselves. No act is private and nothing is unimportant. Everything works out its destiny. The doctrine of Karma does not imply that actions are uncaused. But they are determined by no external force. Karma is not caprice. It is being determined by one's own action.

The doctrine of Karma and the outlook it has created in the minds of men have been responsible for the way of life in India. Faith in the law of Karma, in the absolute justice of the rewards and punishments that fall to the lot of men, makes people bear their lot without bitterness and hatred.

Closely connected with the doctrine of Karma is the doctrine of rebirth. One short life is hardly sufficient for man's spiritual development. Many births are a spiritual necessity for the development of man. The doctrine assures us that the moral values and worth achieved in one life are not lost for ever. They are carried into other lives. The theory makes for the moral and spiritual continuity of man. Nothing good is lost ; no moral effort is without its continued good effects.

Life in this world is regarded by all the systems as a preparation for the realization of *mokṣa*. 'Samsāra is a succession of spiritual opportunities', is the verdict of Dr. Radhakrishnan.

To awaken the spiritual in man and help him to realize it, and thus to humanize man, is the supreme objective of all institutions, social and religious. Ill-informed critics are of the opinion that Indian philosophy is ascetic and other-worldly. They declare that it is world-neglecting, static and life-destroying. This is an overdrawn and partial picture. Indian philosophy is dynamic, pragmatic and is inspired by spiritual vision. It has taken note of the natural motives, instincts and passions of man and has regulated them. It aims at evolving a civilization which is naturally productive, socially just, aesthetically beautiful and spiritually integral. It is not a country without a capital, nor is it a formless lump of creeds with no central doctrines to hold it. It is a citadel with a ring of outworks, intricate but interrelated. The outworking are being added to from time to time.

Man is seeking for pleasure and for happiness where it can never be found. For countless ages we are all taught that this is futile and vain, there is no happiness here. But we cannot learn ; it is impossible for us to do so, except through our own experiences.

* * * *

Know that every thought and word that weakens you in this world is the only evil that exists. Whatever makes men weak and fear, is the only evil that should be shunned.

* * * *

These spheres and devils and gods and reincarnations and transmigrations are all mythology ; so also is this human life. The great mistake that men always make is to think that this life alone is true. They understand it well enough when other things are called mythologies, but are never willing to admit the same of their own position. The whole thing as it appears is mere mythology, and the greatest of all lies is that we are bodies, which we never were nor ever can be.

— SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

ACHARYA SANKARA

(Continued from the previous issue)

SWAMI APURVANANDA

One morning Śaṅkara went out for a bath in the Alwai river along with his mother. Quite a crowd of men and women were at the river, washing, bathing, performing ablutions. Viśiṣṭa finished her bath first and reached the bank. Śaṅkara was still in the water, splashing and plunging when a crocodile attacked him. The boy shouted out, 'Mother, save me! A crocodile is dragging me in.' With no thought for her own safety the alarmed mother jumped into the water to save the boy from the clutches of the crocodile. She held out her hands to pull him away. Other bathers also did the same. But the crocodile was pulling him down to deeper waters. All efforts to save Śaṅkara were proving of no avail. Śaṅkara felt exhausted and made an appeal to his mother at what seemed to be his last moment on earth. 'Mother dear,' he pleaded, 'the crocodile is taking me down. The end of my life is near. You refused to let me take Sannyasa, but without Sannyasa there is no deliverance. If you grant me permission at least now, I shall, in spirit if not in form, take to the life of Sannyasa here and now, thinking of God. Even this mental renunciation will deliver me from the cycle of birth and death. Be gracious, mother, and grant me your hearty permission to take to Sannyasa.'

Viśiṣṭa had to come to an immediate decision. Here was her sole beloved slipping fast from her. Why should he go, she thought, with a deep longing of his unfulfilled? So she brought herself to saying, 'So be it, my son. You may become a sanniyasin. You have my permission to turn monk.' Hardly had she uttered these words than she fainted away. Śaṅkara though young was quite ripe for Sannyasa, but the mother in Viśiṣṭa could never be ripe enough to renounce her son. So even

as her permission to her son to renounce was forced out of her, her system could not contain the enormity of the sacrifice she was making, and sank under the weight of it. She was hastily carried off to the river bank and made to rest.

But Śaṅkara acted quickly. The only hurdle before him had been removed. With single-minded devotion he surrendered himself to Providence and willed himself to Sannyasa. He took the mighty vow of total renunciation, administering the sacred pledges himself to himself, functioning both as the initiating guru and the initiated disciple. He was filled with bliss ineffable, for Sannyasa is the crowning glory for the human spirit in its ascent to Beatitude. The astrological possibility of death at the eighth year was thus circumvented, Sannyasa being in essence dying to the heretofore and stepping out wholly into fresh fields and pastures new.

While mother and son were thus preoccupied, one with intense grief and the other with exploiting a moment of grave danger to an immense purpose, the fellow-bathers were still frightening away the crocodile and pulling back Śaṅkara to safety. Meanwhile some sturdy fisherman who were fishing in the river came to the spot and cast their nets around, and the crocodile which set Śaṅkara free from the net of worldly attachment, itself got caught in the net of the fishermen. It struggled and strove, but could not tear through the nets. It must have been caught, and disposed of in the usual way by the fishermen, but traditional accounts say that the crocodile was really a celestial being, a Gandharva, under a curse, and that on his coming into contact with the holy body of Śaṅkara, prompted though by animal passion for human food, the curse got

liquidated and the Gandharva, filled with gratitude to his deliverer, fled, heavenward. The Sanskrit biography, Śaṅkara Vijaya Vilasa, contains this version of the incident.

It all seemed to be a play of destiny — the attack by an alligator, the enforced permission to renounce granted under the stress of impending death, the permission being followed immediately by deliverance, all these were suggestive of a well-planned ruse rather than indicative of chance occurrences. Both the mother and the son lay on the river bank, the one unconscious and insensitive, the other wounded and bleeding. A physician who came there drawn by the noise rendered first aid to Śaṅkara. The bleeding stopped, and Śaṅkara for all the ordeal he had undergone was soon his normal self. The mother too revived and lovingly embraced Śaṅkara who had been saved from the very jaws of death. She had feared she had lost him; for the crocodile grip is not easily shaken off, but now she saw that hers he was, whole and sound, still her very own. The brief incident of her permitting him to renounce had faded from her memory like an unpalatable dream. She got ready to return home, grateful to Providence that everything had ended so well. But Śaṅkara's words came to her as a rude shock. 'Mother dear,' he said, 'home is not for me any more. I cannot be a Grahastha, a home-stayer, any longer. I am a Sannyasin, and scriptures do not enjoin a monk to stay in a house of his own. I shall therefore stay under a tree.'

The agonized mother wondered why Śaṅkara was so very particular to carry out scriptural injunctions to the very letter. 'Why do you speak this way?' she reasoned with him, 'You are yet a boy. Sannyasa is not for boys. Why should you go away from home even now? After all I shall not live a long while yet. My days are numbered. You may leave home after I die. But stay with me as long as I live. You see, you have a duty to me too.'

But Śaṅkara was firm in his resolve. He told his mother, "It was with your express

consent that I took to 'Antima Sannyasa' — Sannyasa at the last moment of my life. True, I have a duty to you. The duty of a true son is to ensure that his mother's words are not falsified. The very fulfilment of my duty to you, the very demand of true sonhood, requires my leaving home at once.'

Viśiṣṭha was inconsolable. She gave vent to her grief and remorse in various ways. To be deprived of an only son at her age was to lose her very hold on life. 'Who will look after me when you are gone?' she pathetically asked. 'Who will take me to places of pilgrimage? Who will nurse me and serve me in my last moments? Who will light my funeral pyre? Who will do me the last rites? Am I to be a forlorn woman while I live and a forlorn soul unblest with proper ceremonies after I am dead? Do not leave me, my son. Live your life whatever way you please, but stay with me.'

Śaṅkara's position was difficult. He was tossed between the stern demand of the monastic vow on the one side and the powerful appeal of human affection on the other. Scriptural injunction and sacred tradition do not permit a monk to continue to stay at home for whatever reason. And so a multiplicity of thoughts assailed Śaṅkara. But except for the natural tenderness of a son towards his mother, no feeble sentiment, no pull of worldliness troubled him at all. He saw his way clear and his eyes were set firmly on the goal. No doubt filial affection, pure in its very nature, had a powerful hold on him, but the higher call of the soul was not stifled by it. It was that supreme moment of crisis which comes to every aspiring soul that now confronted Śaṅkara — the moment which decides whether one will just soar a little and then slip or will soar on Homa-like, right to the heavens. And Śaṅkara was a Homa-bird. He prayed to the Lord of his inner soul, 'O Master, give me strength and the will to resist. Clear away all obstacles from my path. Give my mother the good sense not to stand in the way of my acquiring true knowledge. Image of strength that you are, endow

the motherly heart with the fortitude to sacrifice.' And then he gave Viśiṣṭa an assurance that would reconcile her to the inevitable separation from her son. 'Mother dear,' he said, 'the God who saved me from the crocodile, that very God will make everything smooth for us. Do not worry. I shall call our near kinsmen and entrust to them the responsibility of managing the property which will amply provide for your few needs all your lifetime. With your blessings I hope to tread the Yoga path successfully and attain the knowledge of the Reality. And wherever I am, dear mother, when in your last moments you think of me I shall come to know of it and by the power of Yoga shall quickly reach you, to be at your side when you enter the beyond. I also assure you that before you leave your body I shall make it possible for you to have a vision of your Chosen Diety. You spoke of pilgrimages. What greater good can they bring you than what I promise you now? The purpose of pilgrimage is acquiring the capacity for the vision spiritual. Scriptures cannot be false, and I can never speak anything but the truth. Believe what I say. I shall be at your side as on your death bed you think of me. Bless me now without any mental reservation that my renunciation may be total and meaningful, thorough and fruitful."

All the circumstances that attended Śaṅkara's birth now flashed vividly on Viśiṣṭa's mind, and she realized that things were taking shape as they had been predestined. She mustered strength to say, "So be it then; my son. I bless you all I can. May you attain your cherished goal!"

Śaṅkara was delighted. His prayer had been heard. He saw that there was now no anguish in the great mother-heart of Viśiṣṭa, and that she sang out the top-pitch of the tune of sacrifice, which motherhood is, in full-throated ease, without any strain or dissonance. He told her, "Mother, I am physically almost all right now. The wound caused by the crocodile gives me little pain. Tomorrow morning I shall formally embrace Sannyasa in

scriptural style and leave the village. Please make the necessary arrangements for the ceremony. You have to provide the ochre robe, the loin-cloth, the 'Danda' (or stick) and the 'Kamaṇḍalu' (or water vessel) and get things ready for the sacrificial Homa fire. I shall have the robe of the monk put on me by you yourself."

It is difficult for a mother to dress her son with the garment of renunciation, but Viśiṣṭa rose to the occasion. All through the night she was busy gathering and setting up the things needed for the holy ceremony. Morning came, and the hour for Śaṅkara's enrolment in the immortal ranks of India's golden company of all-renouncing monks. Śaṅkara who was quite an adept in scriptural matters lit the sacred fire in the prescribed manner, and as there was no monk present to initiate him performed the Viraja Homa himself and emerged a full-blown Sannyasin.¹ The villagers in mute wonder watched the extraordinary doings of this wonder-boy who at his tender age had the wisdom and the will to do the Viraja Homa, the last great rite that puts an end to all rites and brings out the aspirant, fire-bathed as it were, in flame-hued clothing symbolising the combustion of everything that binds and belittles.

The young Sannyasin bowed at the feet of his mother and with her blessings went to worship the family deity, Keśava. With measured steps, and his head bent down, with devotion beaming out of him and a lustre enveloping him he proceeded to the temple. Kneeling down before the bewitching image he let himself go in a beautiful hymn to the Lord, in a passionate appeal of soul, voicing the mad longing of the human heart for divine plenitude. Tears flowed from his eyes, and he held Keśava in a warm embrace of oneness. As he came out of the temple the priests who stood thrilled to see the ardour of his devotion drew his attention to the dilapidated condition

¹ There are also accounts which say that Śaṅkara took Sannyasa formally from his guru, Govindapada. Other accounts do not refer to any formal ceremony of taking Sannyasa as having been performed by him.

of the temple. The river Alwai they told him, had by its change of course eroded the basement, and the superstructure might collapse at any moment. Sankara saw that the image might any day get buried and lost in the river. With the consent of the priests he took the deity in his own arms and removed it to a safe place and directed the villagers to build a temple over the image at the new site. Tradition has it that the removal of the image was done at the suggestion of a heavenly voice and also that Sankara received instructions in the matter in a dream from Keśava Himself.

As Sankara left home and walked away, his mother and many others followed him. They wondered where exactly he was going. As the farthest limit of the village was reached they suggested to him the building of a hermitage there. They said he could live there the life he liked, being away from and yet near to home and native place. The mother made her last piteous appeal to him not to get out of the neighbourhood. But Sankara's decision had been made. His heart was steel-ed. The call of his mission would not let him compromise his vow of Sannyasa in any manner. He consoled his mother again and again, bade her and the others farewell, and resolutely and silently and all alone walked away north.²

² A word of explanation of Sankara's apparent hard-heartedness to his loving mother becomes necessary here. She was a widow then, and he was her only son. Was it not his primary duty to stay with her, look after her and make the evening of her life happy and smooth? Was it any part of worthy renunciation to renounce the mother who gave him birth and body? Was the ideal of renunciation founded on a cruel negation of one's elementary duty? If renunciation was really to culminate in love for all created things, in universal good, in the welfare of the many, was it to start its grand course on a cruel infliction of life-long agony on the very noble institution of motherhood? A letter of Swami Vivekananda (who reminds us in a hundred ways over and over again of Sankara), addressed to Haridas Viharidas Desai and dated January 29, 1894 throws much light on this point. The Swami who wrote from America, said in the letter, 'I am glad

The star of Kaladi shot out into wider expanses.

to learn that you went to see my poor mother and my younger brothers. But you have touched the only soft place in my heart. You should know that I am not an unfeeling stone. If there is any person whom I love in the wide world that is my mother. Even then I firmly believe that if I had not renounced the world, I could not have brought to light the great truth that my great master Paramahansa Sri Ramakrishna Deva had come to preach in the world.' Swami Vivekananda was far from being a stone-hearted person. He sacrificed his devotion to his mother at the altar of a greater good. But his very human heart ceaselessly thought of and felt for his mother. How deep was the thoroughly monastic-tempered Vivekananda's love for his mother is well brought out in what a lady friend of his has said of him: 'He spoke often of his mother. I remember his saying that she had wonderful self-control, and that he had never known any woman who could fast so long. She had once gone without food, he said, for as many as fourteen days together. And it was not uncommon for his followers to hear such words upon his lips as, "It was my mother who inspired me to this. Her character was a constant inspiration to my life and work." It is recorded by another lady that in a lecture Vivekananda paid his filial homage to his own mother who had enabled him to do the best he had done by her life of unselfish love and purity, which life caused him, by the very force of inheritance, to choose the life of a monk. And one of the most lovely episodes we come across in Vivekananda's biography is that of his American women-admirers sending a letter to his mother in far-off India, unbeknown to the Swami himself, together with a beautiful picture of the child Jesus in the lap of the Virgin Mary. The letter said, 'We who have your son in our midst send you greeting. His generous service to men, women and children in our midst was laid at your feet by him, in an address he gave to us the other day on the Ideals of Motherhood in India. Accept our grateful recognition of your life and work in and through your son.'

Sankara and Vivekananda were of the same stuff. Their renunciation was not the drying up, but the richer blossoming of the deepest human feelings. And if apparently they did not serve their mothers as other good sons do, it is only an evidence of the bigness of their being and of the vastness of their life's mission. To Sankara his mother was verily Yasoda and to her he was the darling, Krishna. That Sannyasa is not any freezing of human nature but is rather its chastening and heightening is brought out by many incidents of touching humanity in the lives of the great mystics and introverts of the world. What is truly spiritual does not nullify and negate, but rather fulfils the human.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

Swami Tapasyananda is the Head of the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Trivandrum. His article 'To the Enquirers about the Monastic Order of Ramakrishna' gives a clear picture of what the Order stands for, and what is expected of those who wish to be its members.

Dr. P. K. Sundaram is Reader, the Advanced Centre of Philosophy, University of Madras, Madras.

Swami Prabhananda is of the Ramakrishna Order. In his article 'Moral and Religious

Education in Schools' the writer has discussed as to what the teachers could do in imparting such an education.

Dr P. Nagaraja Rao is retired Professor of Philosophy, Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati.

The article 'Acharya Saṅkara' by Swami Apurvananda is the fourth instalment of the series. With this instalment the I Chapter of the forthcoming book by that name comes to an end.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THINKING AND DESTINY: By Harold Waldwin Percival. Privately printed for THE WORD Publishing Co. Inc., New York, Pp. 1014.

The author of this voluminous book, Mr. Percival, is well-known as the editor of the magazine **THE WORD** founded in 1904, in which he expounded his knowledge of Man, Life and the World. The present book may be considered as a recast and enlargement of the writings that appeared in those years.

Mr. Percival was sensitive to supraphysical phenomena right from his childhood. He used to see and to hear unusual things not patent to the physical senses. He was gradually becoming aware of something Immense which contained everything. "In the spring of 1893, I had crossed the 14th Street at 4th Avenue, in New York City. Cars and people were hurrying by. While stepping up to the north-east corner curbstone, Light, greater than that of myriads of suns opened in the center of my head. In that instant or point eternities were apprehended. There was no time. Distance and dimensions were not in evidence. Nature was composed of units. I was conscious of the units of nature and of units as Intelligence. Within and beyond, so to say, there were greater and lesser Lights; the greater pervading the lesser Lights, which revealed the different kinds of units. The Lights were not of nature, they were Lights as Intelligences, Conscious Lights. Compared with the brightness or lightness of those Lights, the surrounding sunlight was a dense fog.

And in and through all Lights and units and objects I was conscious of the Presence of Consciousness. I was conscious of Consciousness as the Ultimate and Absolute Reality, and conscious of the relation of things."

The experience repeated itself on different occasions and naturally enough it revolutionized the mode of life of the subject. He learnt that the truth of things can be found only in this all-containing Consciousness and the way to know it is to put oneself in rapport with this Presence through the instrumentality of Thought. All the knowledge that the author has thence received and expressed has been of this type. It covers an incredible number of subjects and has a stamp of its own. The central idea seems to be that there is a Realm of Permanence and we, men and women in this universe, are original denizens of that Realm who have somehow fallen into the present temporal state of birth and death. We have to awake to the unreal character of this, our existence, and build our way back into the Permanence. The book before us purports to show the way to accomplish this return.

We would not like to pronounce any judgement on this thousand-page reading matter in any way beyond stating that it belongs to the category of writing which has been made familiar to us during the early years of the present century by authors said to have received Inspiration from the Mahatmas in the Himalayas. Be that as it may, we would only note that there are in this Creation several grades of Existence, planes as

they have been called, each with its characteristic organization of consciousness with a varying content of Truth and Ignorance, — at any rate in this triple world, *trailokyam*. Consequently all that comes from these planes cannot be accepted as God's truth simply because it comes from above. The contents of this book have to be subjected to such a scrutiny before they can be accepted: that is to say, a good deal of discriminative selection is necessary. M. P. PANDIT.

APOLLONIUS OF TYANA: By G. R. S. Mead.
Pub.: University Books, New Hyde Park,
New York, Pp. 168. Price: \$ 5.00.

This book deals with the life and achievements of a remarkable mystic, who was a contemporary of, and regarded by some as a rival to Jesus Christ, and who reportedly had spent many years with the Brahmins and Buddhists in our country. A foreword by Leslie Shepherd adorns this treatise, and is in itself a valuable symposium of the "timeless religion of India". His life and the incidents therein show that there was little to distinguish him from many of our prophets, yogis and siddha purushas; when rival churches fought for supremacy, he taught 'pure inner realization', known to the sages of India. Apollonius had possessed the esoteric knowledge of the Upanishads and had transmitted it to his disciples. This teaching is, as Leslie Shepherd so well puts it, that the time, space and causality with its myriad bodies and souls, are only the manifestations of the Absolute: all names and forms are illusory.

There is a reference in this book to the birth of Sri Ramakrishna and the passing away of Sri Rama Maharishi (xx).

Truly enough, it is claimed that it is from the religion and the saints of India that one gets the inner picture of the subject of this biography (xxii).

Apollonius, it is stated, returned from India with a distinct mission. Not only had he learnt the Brahma Vidya, but he had acquired the power to converse with the Indian seers and sages (86).

The author believes that the earliest Grecian centre had had acquaintance with the Upanishads, the Gita and Vedantic ideas (22 and 23). Apollonius had in fact spread abroad a part of the ancient Indian wisdom.

His mode of life very closely approximated to that of a Sannyasin and a Vanaprashtha (66, 67 and 72). He had also undergone 'mouna vrata' (68).

Sec. XII, details all the miracles and siddhis which he had performed and they make very interesting reading indeed.

He believed in prayer, but it was unthinkable to him that God should deal with our selfish hopes and fears.

His attitude towards death was that of the Hindu mystics. No one is ever born, nor does one ever die. It is simply being visible and then invisible.

Altogether, this publication is of lasting value, and the recorded experiences of this Philosopher-Reformer of the First Century A.D. remind us that we too can make our lives sublime and purposive.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

SREEMAD BHAGAVATAM: By Dr. W. Radhakrishnayya. Pub.: Sri Ramanalayam, Pakala, A.P. Pp. 224. Price: Rs. 3.00.

Though included among the Eighteen Puranas, the *Bhagavatam* enjoys in the religious world of India a position normally given to a Scripture. And that is so because in no other work are the glories of the Lord, Sri Krishna, celebrated in such an elevating manner as in this inspired Poem. Apparently it contains miracle stories. But underneath there is an unbroken current of spiritual instruction. The writer of this book has brought in this factor to prominence without in any way marring the fluency of the narrative.

The main contents of the *Bhagavatam* are told in the form of stories woven round certain central figures of the Epics. The philosophical contents are served in small doses in an appealing manner and at important places the symbolism of the imagery is explained. Regarding the term *tripura*, for instance, he observes: "Tripura means the three cities, i.e. bodies wherein the Supreme dwells and gives them the semblance of life, without whom they would revert to be mere dust. The term is used as an allegory. There are great expositions on this subject. Here, in this context, it may be taken as Isvara, the Seeker, the Jiva, Vishnu the Supreme Lord or the Self. Asuras are the demons who are no other than the evil thoughts and evil tendencies in the seeker. The gods are the noble thoughts and noble intentions ... the three cities are the gross, subtle and causal bodies; gold, silver and steel are the three *gunas*, *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*; the evil thoughts travel through all these states called waking, dream and deep sleep ... they can be destroyed by the seeker in the midday, meaning in the light of True-Knowledge."

The author is imbued with a deep spirit of devotion and does communicate something of it to the reader. The book is a reliable presentation of the great Scripture.

M. P. PANDIT.

NEWS AND REPORTS

VIVEKANANDA VEDANTA SOCIETY
VIVEKANANDA TEMPLE
5423 S. HYDE PARK BLVD.
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

REPORT OF THE DEDICATION CEREMONY OF THE NEW TEMPLE AND THE SYMPOSIUM OF RELIGIONS

The new Temple of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago, 5423 South Hyde Park Blvd., Chicago, Illinois 60615, was dedicated on Wednesday, September 7th in the presence of seven other Swamis of the Order, and a large congregation. The presence of the Swamis created an atmosphere of festivity and holiness.

The new Chapel accommodates comfortably 130 people. It has a beautiful platform and pedestal on which a bronze relief of Shri Ramakrishna has been installed. The statue was made by Mr. Herman Garfield, one of the best artists of Chicago, and bears the likeness of the original picture of Shri Ramakrishna. On the second floor of the new Temple a Shrine Room has been fixed with four thrones made of Rosewood, beautifully carved, and sent from India just a couple of days prior to the dedication.

On the day of dedication, early in the morning at 5-30 A.M., the visiting Swamis and some of the local devotees, as well as devotees who had arrived in Chicago from other Centers, assembled in the Chapel. Swami Bhashyananda, the head of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago, performed the morning vesper service. This service was followed by peace chants from the Upanishads, and hymns in praise of Brahman, Shri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother and Swamiji. This was followed by meditation. The whole morning service created a deep spiritual atmosphere in the Chapel. The regular worship began at 8-30 A.M. Swami Shraddhananda of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, performed the worship. He was assisted by Swami Vandanananda of Hollywood Center and the Brahmacharis of the Chicago Center. Swami Satprakashananda, the head of the Vedanta Society of St. Louis, read the Chandi. His reading created a very serene and holy atmosphere throughout the whole morning worship. The Puja was over at 11-00 A.M., and it was followed by Homa. The devotees were thrilled to see this worship. The morning worship ended with an offering of cooked food, and Arati to Shri Ramakrishna. The devotees were then served with

lunch consisting of the offered food, with which the first part of the service came to an end at 1-30 P.M.

In the evening at 6-30 P.M. there was a reception. Accommodation for 200 people was made for this function. All the Swamis, headed by Swami Bhashyananda, formed a procession from the second floor to the Chapel on the first floor. They came to the platform and took their seats at the right side of the Chapel. Swami Bhashyananda conducted the proceedings of the evening reception. The proceedings began with the opening chant by the Swami, in Sanskrit, followed by its English rendering. He made a short introductory speech, giving the background of the occasion, and thanked all those who had helped him in this project. He then introduced the guest Swamis who had come for this special function, and requested them to speak a few words to the congregation. The Swamis made very inspiring speeches. Swami Bhashyananda then concluded the service, and the congregation and the guests were thanked by Mr. Miller, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Society.

The congregation then moved to the outside patio for refreshments. The devotees of the Center, headed by Mrs. Miller, had arranged a very grand buffet dinner. Over 200 devotees and guests were present. The day's function came to an end at 10-30 P.M.

As a part of the dedication, a symposium of religions was arranged on Sunday, September 11th, to commemorate the 73rd anniversary of the Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago in 1893. There were six speakers representing Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Unitarianism. The proceedings began at 7-00 P.M., with an invocation by Swami Bhashyananda who presided over the function. He introduced the speakers and referred to that memorable event 73 years back, when the great Swami Vivekananda of India spoke at the Parliament of Religions, and made his unique contribution to the world religions by striking a note of harmony and understanding among the faiths of the world. The speakers of the evening kept up the tradition by voicing a similar note of harmony and peace and mutual respect for Prophets and Faiths of the world. Swami Bhashyananda concluded the proceedings, quoting significant passages from the speeches of Swami Vivekananda during the Parliament. Over 100 men and women attended the symposium.

DECEMBER, 1966

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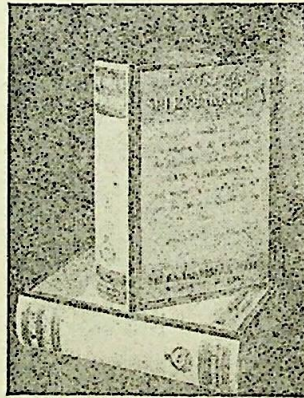
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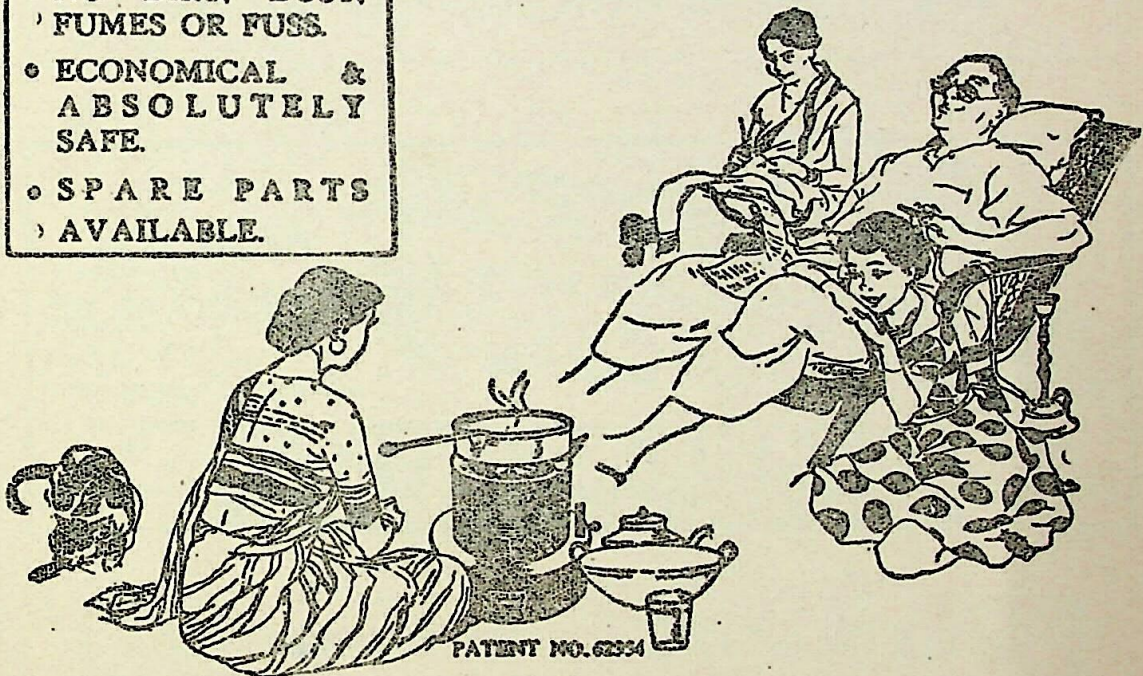
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